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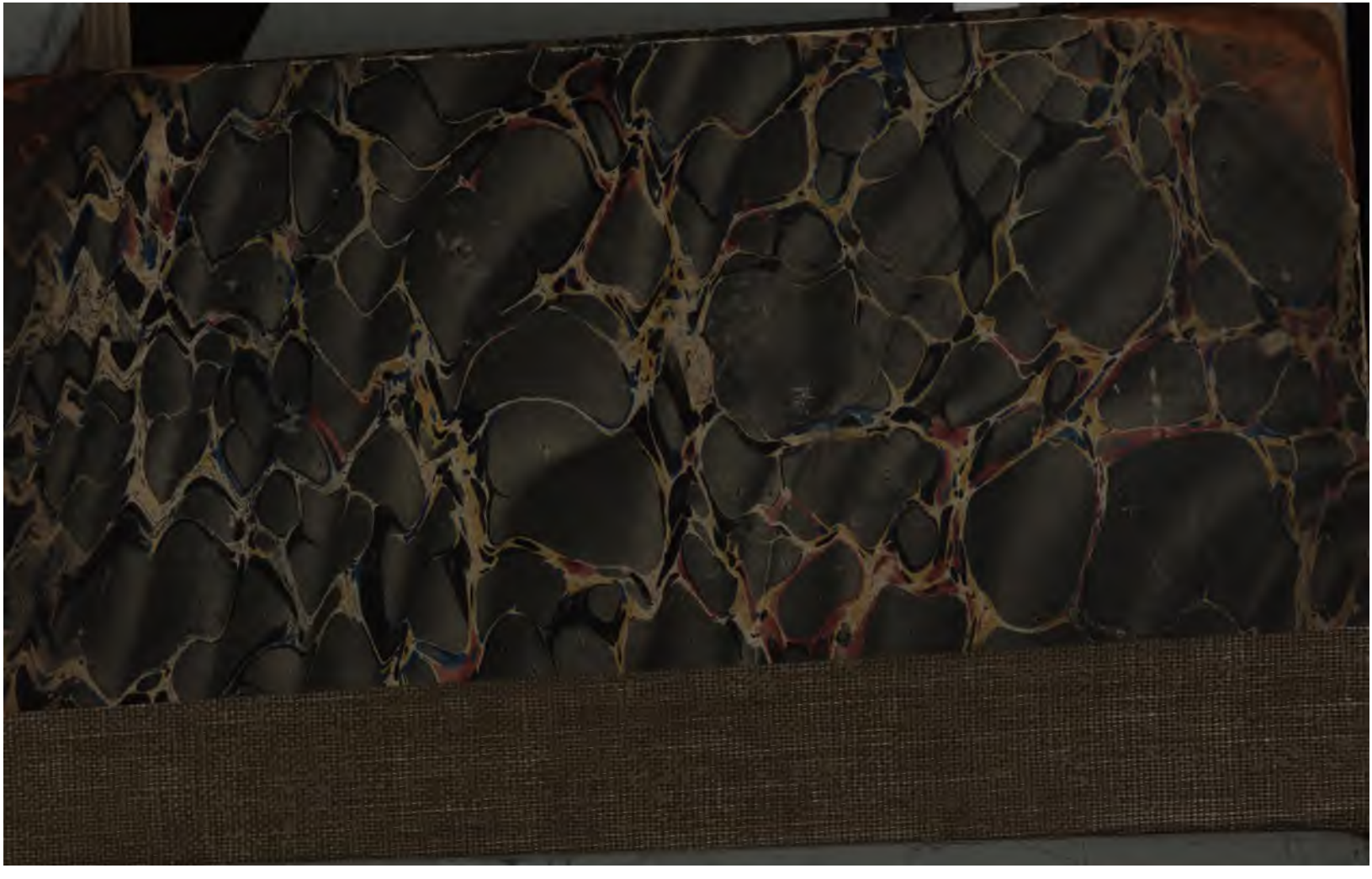

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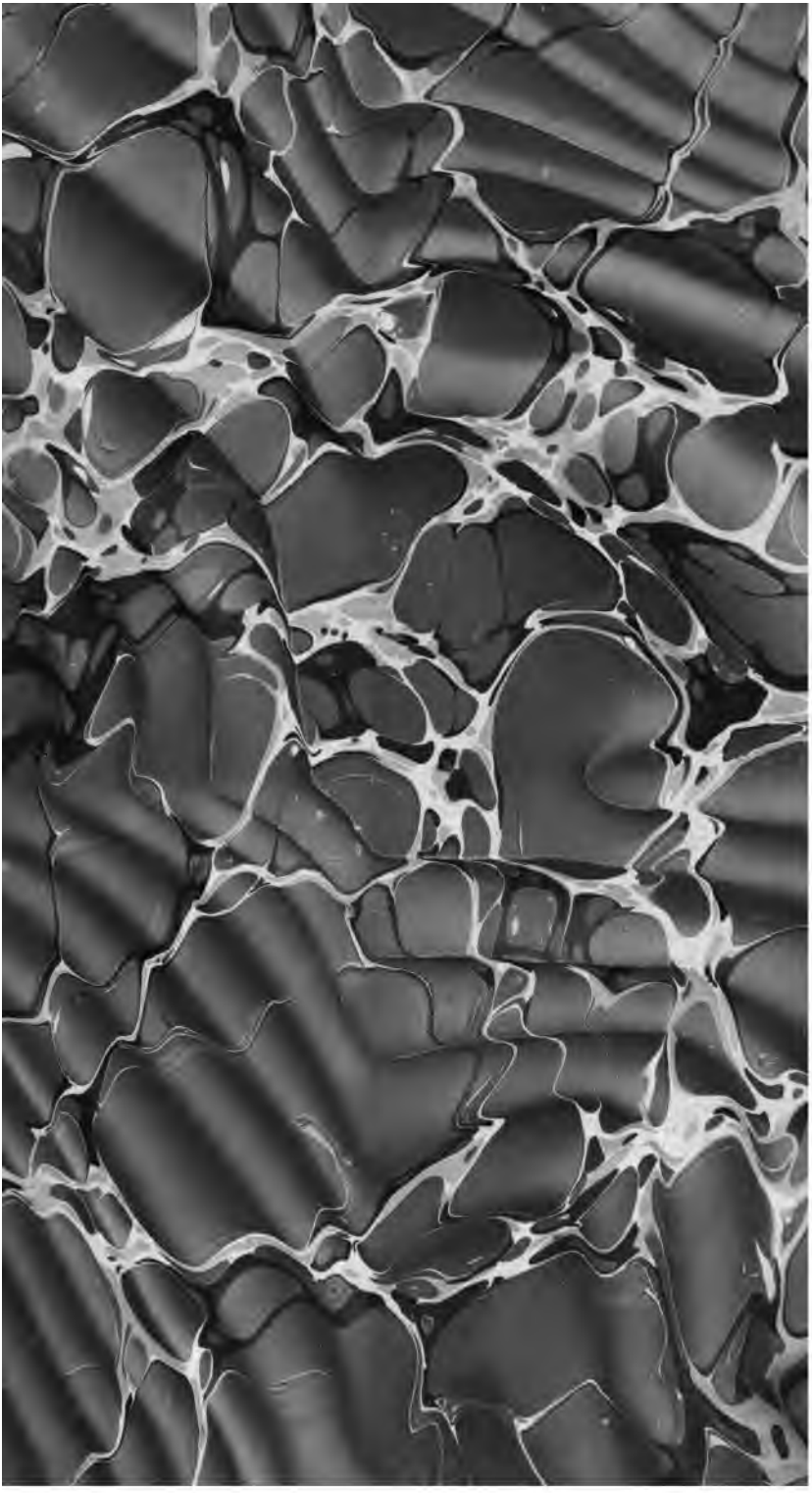

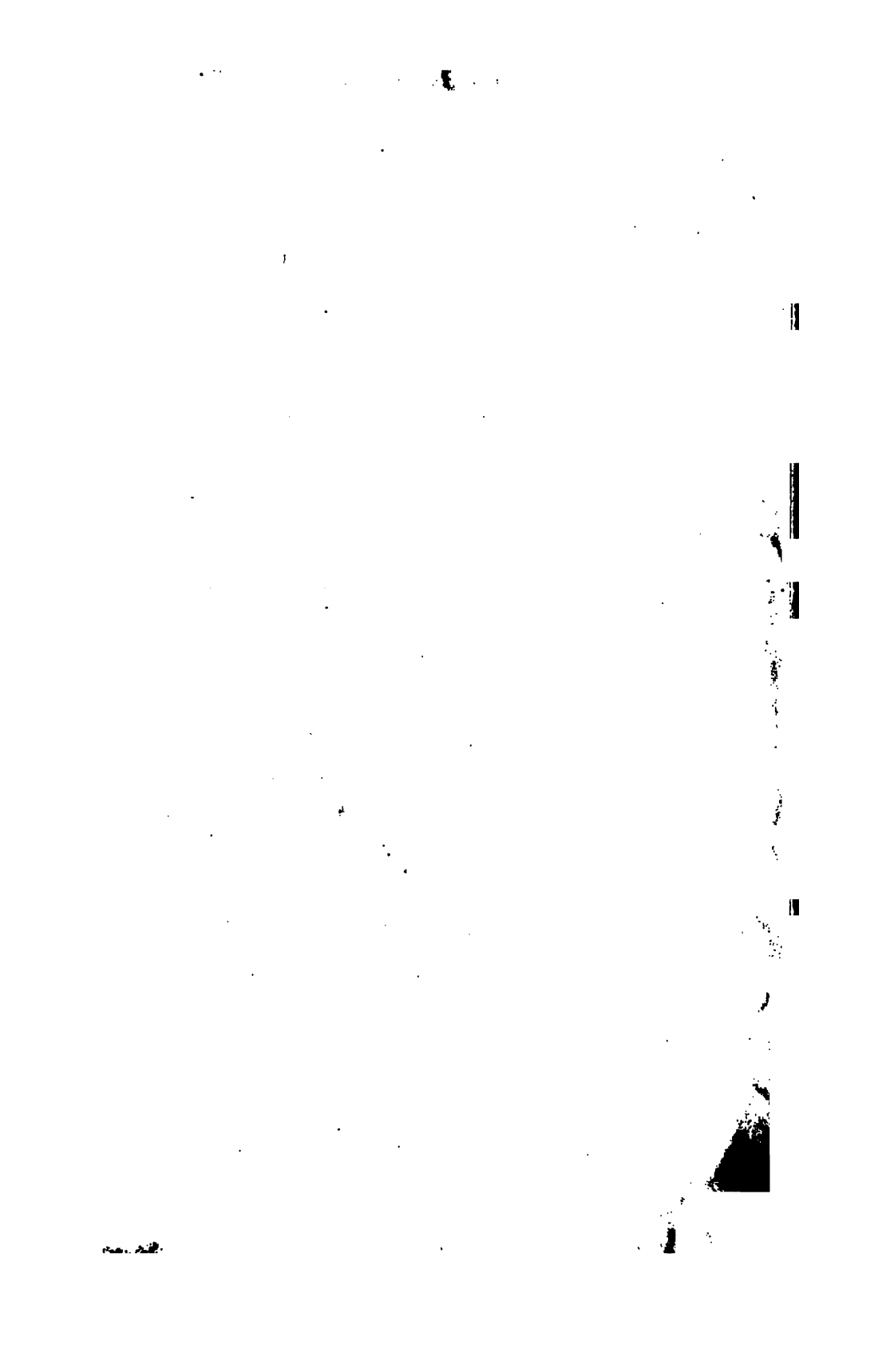

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AN

Antidote againſt Deiſm,

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF ——

In which the Arguments againſt the eternal prevalence of Sin and Miſery, and in favor of the Reſtitution, or final Reſtoration of all Things, are candidly ſtated from Scripture; and alſo an Anſwer to Objections:

WITH

An Introductory Letter to Mr VIDLER,

Preacher of Univerſal Reſtoration, and Paſtor of a Church of that Perſuaſion, London.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A REVIEW OF

Preſident EDWARDS's Sermon on the Eternity of Hell Torments;

A PRAYER ADAPTED TO THE SUBJECT;

AN HYMN

On the Creation of the New Heavens and New Earth;

With a Brief Summary of the Proof.

ALSO

Some Strictures on Dr RYLAND's Sermon, entitled, "*The Firſt Lie refuted.*"

By N. DOUGLAS,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AND PREACHER OF THE FINAL RESTORATION, GREENOCK.

To teach new doctrines, or to cenſure old,
With care proceed; you tread a dangerous path:
Error eſtabliſh'd grows eſtabliſh'd faith.
'Tis eaſier much, and much the ſafer rule,
To teach in pulpit what you learn'd at ſchool;
With zeal defend whate'er the church believes,
If you expect to thrive, or wear lawn ſleeves:
And are new doctrines taught, or old reviv'd;
Let them from Scripture plainly be deriv'd. ART OF PREACHING.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED *AND SOLD* BY JOHN TAYLOR, GUILDHALL

1802.

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The following Publications, on the final Reſtoration, may be had of E. VIDLER, *No.* 349, *Strand, London; and of* J. TAYLOR, *Graſsmarket, Edinburgh.*

Dialogues on Univerſal Reſtoration, with notes by W. Vidler, fine 4s. common -	L. 0	2	0
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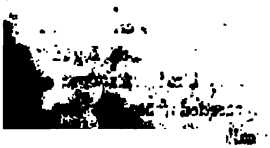
Theological Magazine, by W. Vidler. This work, altho' principally dedicated to the illuſtration of the doctrine of Reſtoration, will be found an impartial vehicle of religious diſcuſſion and intelligence, in which Chriſtians of every denomination are invited to appear in their own dreſs. It is regularly pu-
liſhed in monthly numbers, at



PREFACE.

OUR Divine Maſter compriſes the whole of his religion in two points, the love of God and of our neighbour. The firſt of theſe naturally produces the other, and both are inſeparable. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, (ſaith Paul) therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." The ſaying of the Apoſtle John, who felt, in a high degree, the influence of this principle, merits ſerious conſideration—"If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he who loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loves God love his brother alſo: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf."

The perſon who loves him that begets, will, for that very reaſon, love thoſe who are begotten of him. God is the creator or father of all men; and they are, therefore, bound to love, one another as brethren. As he is no ſuch reſpecter of perſons, as to confine his paternal love to any claſs of his creatures; ſo ſhould our beſt wiſhes, and kind offices, as we have opportunity, extend to all, according to their diverſified rank in the ſcale of exiſtence. Is man naturally led to ſeek his own happineſs, from the native influence of the principle of ſelf-love and will not the genuine love of our neighbour lead us to wiſh and ſeek his good? An indifference to his welfare, either here or hereafter, is quite incompatible with that fraternal affection. If alive to a ſenſe of our own guilt and miſery, will we not be anxious about deliverance, and the means by which it may be effected? A fellow creature, whether happy or miſerable, whether in this ſtate or in that to come, does not ceaſe to be our brother; and therefore, the love we owe him juſtifies every inquiry in our power reſpecting his future deſtination. Can one member of the great houſehold ſuffer, and the reſt have no fellow-feeling with it? While the common doctrine dooms millions of theſe to miſery, which admits of neither end, meaſure, or mitigation, and it is poſſible we ourſelves, or ſome of our deareſt relatives may be of the number, will we refuſe coolly to weigh any arguments that may be urged from ſcripture in favour of their reſtoration? Does God require ſuch a ſacrifice at our hand, out of deference to the opinion of fallible men, founded on words confeſſedly indefinite, and applied to ſubjects between which there is an infinite difference with regard to their duration, ſuch as the Moſaic ritual, and the eternal King? or can that love which we bear to all men juſtify ſuch an apathy to their happineſs?

In the letter addreſſed to Mr V. ſome of the reaſons of this publication are aſſigned. In the progreſs of the work, the ſubject appeared with additional light or evidence, which ſometimes led to recur to articles which had been previouſly under review. Tho' the whole was written, he ventures to ſay, under the influence of that philanthropy which the doctrine itſelf is ſo much calculated to inſpire; yet was it not eaſy wholly to ſuppreſs the innocent feelings of nature, which groſs miſrepreſentation, the keen ſeverity of unmerited cenſure, and the anathemas of bigotry, muſt produce in every ſuſceptible mind.

The late famous Mr Burke ſays, ſomewhere in his writings, that in all religious perſuaſions the bigots are perſecutors. The reaſon he aſſigns is, that they will not take the pains to examine the grounds of the tenets of their adverſaries, whence they are ready to aſcribe to them the very worſt of motives for maintaining ſuch doctrines. Prejudice of old cried, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?—out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet!" But Bigotry went farther, and exclaimed, "Away with him; Crucify him, crucify him!" Candour aſked, "Why, what evil hath he done?" This remonſtrance proceeded from the heathen judge. When thoſe of the ſacred office, as they are called,

wonder the people under their charge ſhould be bigots, and ſhew far leſs candour than thoſe whom they brand as infidels, and deem unworthy to be ſet with the dogs of their flock.

The power of early prejudice may be ſeen even in the common concerns of life. When the uſe of fanners was firſt introduced, many objected to them, upon this ground, that it was not lawful to make uſe of the devils wind to clean their grain: But every old wife in the country would not ſcruple, at the ſame time, to blow up her fire with this very wind. That has been often branded as coming from Satan, which, upon inquiry, was found to be of God. Our Lord himſelf was miſtaken by his own diſciples for an apparition, when he came treading on the waves of the lake for their relief. Not ſeldom, too, the tares are taken for wheat.

Many apply the terms *heretic* and *apoſtate* to thoſe who recede from any article of their belief, without attempting to convict them of having erred from the faith of the goſpel. Hereſy may be taken in a good or bad ſenſe, and denotes, in its original acceptation, no more than a *choice* or *ſect*; and an *heretic* is one that makes a choice, and, in conſequence of this, attaches himſelf to a ſect, party, or denomination, that is like minded. Thoſe who differed in their judgment viewed them in a bad light, and hence the term came to be mutually applied in the worſt ſenſe. Chriſtianity itſelf was at firſt univerſally called a hereſy; *after the way which they call hereſy*, ſaid Paul, *ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets*. The word *apoſtacy* was deemed quite harmleſs, until deſigning men found an intereſt in attaching odium to it. Dr Johnſton explains it, in his Dictionary, "a *departure* from what a man has *profeſſed*." According to this definition, all Proteſtants are apoſtates from the Romiſh church, and all diſſenters are apoſtates from the eſtabliſhed churches to which they originally belonged. There may be apoſtacy from that which is bad, as well as from truth and piety; whence it is often a duty to apoſtatiſe.

Faith is the reſult of conviction, not of force, nor of any ſecular expedient that may be employed to bribe the underſtanding. The unreſtrained liberty of thinking, judging, ſpeaking, writing, and acting for himſelf, in all matters of religion, is that inalienable right of private judgment, which every man derives from God, and cannot, by human compact or conſent, be diſſolved or given up. The obligation to believe and obey God in all things, and him alone, is founded on his relation to us as our Creator, Redeemer, Lawgiver, and Judge; and becauſe this relation always exiſts, the obligation reſulting from it cannot ceaſe to bind the conſcience, or be transferred to any creature or church; What a man thus believes with the heart, he is bound, as a Chriſtian, to confeſs; and if he do not, he walks in craftineſs, and handles what he believes to be the word of God deceitfully. Can that God who has made this every man's privilege and duty, make it at the ſame time the duty of others, either individual or community, to moleſt their brethren in the exerciſe of that right, or attempt to rob them of it? But the perſon who would benefit mankind, muſt lay his account to be, in the firſt inſtance, oppoſed, miſrepreſented, and reproached. So was the greateſt friend of the human race that ever appeared in the world. Turning to the Lord, and following him fully, is apoſtacy from bondage under the elements of the world and the traditions of the elders, by which the fear of many towards God is taught. Can they ſay worſe of us than the Jews did of Jeſus, *He has a devil*, &c.

From the writings of ſome of our moſt famed authors, it appears that they ſaw ſome ground in ſcripture to expect a reſtoration of all things, tho' ſome of them ſeem to think this will be realized in the millennium. The late worthy and pious Mr Cowper, of the Inner Temple, whoſe poetical works are deſervedly held in great eſtimation, has the following lines, in his Winter Walk at Noon:

"Thus heaven-ward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all muſt be reſtor'd.
So God has greatly purpos'd; who would elſe
In his diſhonour'd works himſelf endure
And be wrong'd without redreſs."

In the contents, the part of the poem which relates to this ſubject is entitled, "The groans of the creation ſhall have an end.—A view taken of the reſtoration of all things." And the permanent reaſon aſſigned, in the lines quoted, requires ſuch a reſtoration, without reſtricting it to the beings that ſhall exiſt at any one period on the earth. Theſe make but a ſmall part of God's works.

The late Dr Blair, in his ſermon on the death of Chriſt, has the following remarks, among others of the ſame import, which plainly ſhew, that he viewed that event as productive of conſequences which are not recognized by the bulk of Chriſtians.—"This awful diſpenſation of the Almighty contains myſteries which are beyond the diſcoveries of man. The nature and extent of the efficacy of his ſufferings, we are unable, as yet, fully to trace Let us not imagine that our preſent diſcoveries unfold the whole influence of the death of Chriſt. It is connected with cauſes into which we cannot penetrate; it produces conſequences too extenſive for us to explore. *God's thoughts are not as our thoughts.* In all things we *ſee only in part;* and here, if any where, *we ſee thro' a glaſs darkly.*"

That the doctrine of the reſtoration has had many of the moſt pious and intelligent Chriſtians in every age for its friends and advocates, there is reaſon to believe. In looking over Mr Middleton's life of that early reformer *Wickliffe*, who was called the firſt *Engliſh Lollard*, I find that very many Chriſtians in Germany, at an early period, held this doctrine among others, on account of which they were accuſed by the Church of Rome, and probably learned it from that great man, whoſe tenets they had eſpouſed. Du Pin is referred to for his authority, whoſe veracity as a writer has been ſeldom called in queſtion. To gratify the reader, I ſhall tranſcribe the whole note, where this teſtimony occurs.—"The ſect of the *Lollards*, ſpread throughout *Germany*, had for their leader *Walter Lollard*, who began to diſperſe his doctrines about the year 1315. He deſpiſed the ſacraments of the church, and derided her ceremonies and her conſtitutions; obſerved not the faſts of the church, nor its abſtinencies; acknowledged not the interceſſion of the ſaints, and believed that the *damned in hell, and even the evil angels, ſhould one day be ſaved.* *Trithemius*, who recites their opinions, ſays that *Bohemia and Auſtria* were infected with them; that there were above 24,000 perſons in *Germany* who held thoſe errors, and that the greater part defended them with obſtinacy, even to death."—Du Pin. Middleton's Biographia Evangelica, vol. 1. p. 26.

Theſe people had the honour to make a noble ſtand againſt the corruptions and encroachments of the Papal power, for which many of them ſuffered to the death, as Du Pin atteſts. It has been owing to their laudable exertions, under God, that Chriſtianity has been all along preſerved in a tolerably pure ſtate in the valleys of Piedmont and Griſſon country. The preſent oppoſers of the doctrine of the reſtoration may ſee who they have for their fellow labourers, the bigotted abettors of the Church of Rome.

In reading the lives of the pious reformers, in that uſeful work, one ſees reaſon to conclude that ſome of them at leaſt had not the ſame contracted view of the extent of our Lord's death, and of the object of his mediation, as many of their modern brethren entertain. That great and good man Mr Wiſhart, on the morning of his martyrdom, partook of the Lord's ſupper with the Captain of the caſtle, and ſome friends. When diſpenſing it, he exhorted them to remember that Chriſt died for them, and that his blood was ſhed for them. But how he could aſſure them of this, if a ſtrict Calviniſt, I am at a loſs to ſay; becauſe it is impoſſible we can be certain, that all in any company, be they many or few, are elected from all eternity. In the public and ſolemn prayer of Cranmer, before the ſentence of death was pronounced againſt him, I find the following clauſes, which expreſſes his view of the extent of Chriſt's death.—"O Son of God, Redeemer of the world—O God the Father, whoſe property is always to have mercy, thou didſt not give thy Son to die for our ſmaller crimes only, but for the greateſt ſins of the whole world."

It is worthy of conſideration, that tho' the Church of England once admitted an article into her creed, expreſsly condemning the doctrine of the reſtoration as heretical, yet upon

mature deliberation ſhe thereafter expunged that article; but why expunge it, if they did not ſee reaſon to believe, upon reviſing the whole, that ſuch judgment was unfounded, and that there is nothing in the doctrine of the final reſtoration that deſerves to be accounted *heretical*? In the liturgy of that church they pray not only, That God would bleſs and keep all his people, but alſo proceed to beſeech him, "that it would pleaſe him to have mercy upon *all* men." How could they pray for this in faith, if they believed the word of God warranted no ſuch prayer, and that he does not intend to ſhew mercy on all men? In prayer we muſt lift up holy hands, without wrath or doubting; but how to pray without doubting, when we have no ſcripture promiſe upon which to found our faith and requeſt, let the abettors of the common ſyſtem ſhew. We are exhorted, however, to pray for all men, for this plain and good reaſon, becauſe this is acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, or to be delivered from ſin and miſery, and reſtored to holineſs and happineſs; and that becauſe he gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time, 1 Tim. ii. 1—7.

But truth itſelf is not affected by the aſſent or diſſent of churches and councils; for it will remain always the ſame whether they receive or reject it. Of all the errors that prevail among Chriſtians, perhaps none prove more fatal than a blind zeal, which leads men to believe that they muſt be acceptable to Deity, becauſe they find their hearts diſpoſed to perſecute their brethren, who may conſcientiouſly differ from them in any article of their creed; whence they perſuade themſelves that by ſuch perſecution they do God excellent ſervice. With Jehu of old they in effect exclaim, Come ſee my zeal for the Lord of hoſts, when the beſt apology you can make for them is, in the words of our Lord upon a ſimilar occaſion, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. However confined the perſecution may be, thro' the favour of civil government, the principle is the ſame. Agreeable to this, Mr Locke ſays, "That if you may ſubject a man to a ſlight degree of puniſhment or inconvenience on account of his religion, you may with equal juſtice ſubject him to any or to all." Would any wiſh to ſee proofs of the exiſtence of the univerſal doctrine in the church from the earlieſt periods, let them conſult the two prefaces prefixed to Jeremiah White's Treatiſe on the Reſtoration of all Things, and there he will find it maintained by ſome of the moſt eminent men in all ages.

The Author has been told, that a work has been lately publiſhed, conſiſting chiefly of extracts from the moſt orthodox authors, in favour of the univerſal reſtoration. Theſe writers might not intend this, nor might it come into their mind; yet truth ſometimes breaks the ſhackles of ſyſtem, and aſſerts her unlimited ſway. The authority of great names weighs much with many; but a Chriſtian ſhould ſay, with Peter and John, "Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Would Calviniſts and Arminians but agree in the two leading points of their ſyſtem, they would be Univerſaliſts.—The latter maintain that Chriſt died for all men; and the former, that all for whom he died ſhall be ſaved. Thus, as the prophet ſpeaks, "the nations ſhall bleſs themſelves in the Lord, and in him ſhall they glory;" Jer. iv. 2. even all the nations which he has made, or ſhall make, Pſal. lxxxvi. 9. And what elſe can be the iſſue of the Divine procedure, if, with Solomon, we allow, that *by mercy and truth iniquity is purged*, without reſtriction?—With the Poet let the writer and the reader join:—

"Let not this weak and erring hand,
Preſume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to ſtay;
If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find that better way!"

TO

Mr WILLIAM VIDLER, *Preacher of Univerſal Reſtoration.*

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH I have not the pleaſure of being perſonally acquainted with you, yet have I derived pleaſure, and, I truſt, inſtruction, from the peruſal of ſome of your writings. You have had the honour of ſucceeding a great man in contending earneſtly for an eſſential, though derided branch of the faith, which was once delivered to the ſaints; and I hope, your candid and ſcriptural defence of it has not been in vain in the Lord. He has reſted from his pious labours, and the ſtrife of tongues, which he had to encounter in his day; and entered into his Maſter's joys, where theſe no more infeſt. Though he was inſtrumental in breaking up much fallow ground, yet you too, I underſtand, have had your ſhare of perſecution, with which every one muſt lay his account that would embark in the ſame honourable cauſe. I truſt, however, you will have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing truth triumph over prejudice, and the pure beneficent religion of Jeſus, which is the cauſe of human kind, burſt aſunder the fetters with which it has been ſo long bound, and emerge, like its Author, to ſet no more, from under every dark and obſcuring cloud, to enlighten and bleſs the human race with its enlivening rays.

Jeſus was deſpiſed, reproached, traduced, accuſed, and crucified, in the garden of his viſible church; and all by his own profeſſed people. In that garden, too, there was a ſepulchre, where they laid him, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch. It is only in the viſible church ſuch things can be done, and there our Lord, his cauſe, and people, have often met with ſuch treatment. His enemies, however, could not prevent his reſurrection, or exaltation to univerſal dominion; and the wrath of man, even of the ſcribes, prieſts, and rulers, ſerved only to praiſe him, and to make the triumphs of his goſpel in the world the more conſpicuous and extenſive. When the Lord ſends his angel or meſſenger to roll away the ſtone, which confines truth in the grave, there will be a commotion; and ſome will be found weeping, and ſome trembling, yet all will iſſue in the joy and triumph of the righteous. The revival of truth, in its native ſimplicity, beautiful harmony, and glorious extent, cannot but alarm the powers of darkneſs, and excite them to uſe all their influence, with friends and foes, to counteract and ſuppreſs its voice. Truth, however, is quick and powerful, though in the mouth of a babe, and will prevail.

It gives me pleaſure to learn, from your Miſcellany, that the univerſal doctrine is gaining ground among the candid and intelligent, who are happily delivered from the ſhackles of human ſyſtems and the undue influence of clerical authority. I would deem it the chief felicity of my life, ſhould God *deign to honour me* to vindicate, in any meaſure, his character *and adminiſtration from* the foul aſperſions of received ſyſtems,

which many have been grieved and ſtumbled. How harſh the idea inculcated by ſome of our reverend doctors, and believed by their admirers, that God has no farther reſpect to the bulk of mankind in giving them being, and preſerving them in it, than to get his elect out of their loins! They ſo barricade all acceſs to the land of promiſe, that no ſooner do poor ſinners attempt to enter, than, deſpairing of ſucceſs, they form the reſolution to go back to Egypt, Numb. xiv. 4.

The men of ſtature, who have poſſeſsed the land of promiſe in paſt times, are a great hinderance to thoſe who ſucceed them, by reaſon of that undue deference they pay to their opinion on religious ſubjects. Thus they are proſtituted into ſons of Anak, and we view ourſelves as graſshoppers in compariſon of them; whence many are deterred from following the Lord fully, and chuſe rather to be the ſervile diſciples of men. "Ceaſe "ye from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of," Iſa. 2. 22.

This is the native conſequence of bringing up a falſe report on that heavenly country, and the mode of poſſeſsing it; and, for two ſpies that gave a fair account, ten joined in a falſe one, and got the whole congregation of the Lord to take part with them, and to unite in the attempt of ſtoning their faithful brethren, who, in that affair, followed the Lord fully. The Jews of old were ready to ſtone our Saviour, with the very ſtones which they had collected about the walls of his temple; and ſuch alſo has often been the fate of his followers. Seldom are theſe exploits achieved without the prieſts having a hand in them. It is worthy of every Chriſtian, and eſpecially of all the miniſters of the goſpel, to endeavour, by word and deed, to place the pure, benevolent, and undefiled religion of Jeſus, in ſuch a ſcriptural, amiable, and inviting light, as may, through the bleſſing of God, conciliate the minds of adverſaries, heal the diviſions of profeſsed friends, and ſecure the triumph of divine truth in the world.

I cannot here give you a particular account of the ſteps by which I was gradually brought to embrace the univerſal doctrine; though, taken altogether, ſingular enough to mark the interpoſition of Heaven. No ſooner was my own heart impreſsed with a ſenſe of divine things, which, bleſſed be God, was at an early period of life, than the common doctrine of the eternal prevalence of ſin and miſery, over the far greater part of God's intelligent works, gave me more concern than I can expreſs. This, with a ſtrong deſire I felt to devote myſelf to the miniſtry of the goſpel, and a fear that I had miſtaken or anticipated the call of the great Lord of the vineyard, gradually brought my mind to a ſtate of the deepeſt diſtreſs which, though for the time, not joyous but grievous, proved, I hope, through the divine bleſſing, a refining furnace. The peruſal of what Chevalier Ramſay has publiſhed on the ſubject, in his Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, and of Worthington on Redemption, both which works happened about that time to fall into my hands, did not, however, remove my difficulties, not ſeeing the ſubject then in the light of Scripture. The time was not yet come. Notwithſtanding, my mind was brought to entertain a hope, that God would, in due ſeaſon, in a way known to, and worthy of, himſelf, manifeſt the agreement of his word with a more univerſal diſplay of his mercy than is commonly admitted. *I thought, however,* that it was not his will this ſhould be now publicly *known, and therefore,* that no perſon ſhould attempt to deduce ſuch a

doctrine from Scripture, for the reaſon which ſtill prevails with many, the fear of its abuſe by the profligate.

I remained in this ſtate of mind, believing, and afterwards declaring in my public miniſtry, the doctrines commonly termed Calviniſtic, till providentially ſome of Mr Wincheſter's writings fell into my hands. Theſe preſented the leading doctrines of that ſyſtem, and indeed the whole of the divine adminiſtration, reſpecting our guilty world, in a quite new, and to me, glorious light. I began the diligent ſearch of the holy Scriptures, which I have continued ever ſince, whence the truth of the doctrine appeared with increaſing evidence, and the difficulties, which once ſeemed inſurmountable, gradually evaniſhed. Such was the joy the doctrine imparted, I could not forbear ſometimes dropping hints relative to it, long before I thought myſelf entitled to ſay any thing deciſively on the ſubject. The doctrine of election, which I always ſaw to be a ſcriptural one, appeared now fraught with mercy to the reſt of men, inſtead of amounting to their total excluſion from all hope for ever, as is uſually taught. Particular election and ſalvation appeared now perfectly conſiſtent with univerſal redemption and reſtoration; and the connection of both in the divine plan harmonized the ſeeming contradictions of Scripture. I ſaw that the elect, as the firſt fruits, were the pledge, earneſt, and pattern of the recovery of their brethren at length, and would have an honourable efficiency in that glorious work. When I was beginning only to perceive the glory, and taſte the ſweetneſs of ſuch a view of the divine plan, I felt myſelf called upon publickly to defend that view, by the following circumſtance:

Calling on a profeſsed friend, upon his own urgent invitation, he begged I would point out ſome of the texts on which the doctrine of the Reſtoration was founded, alleging he did not know, till of late, there was any ſuch doctrine in the world. He urged this the rather, as he had been juſt reading Wincheſter's Sermon, entitled, the Goſpel Preached by the Apoſtles, and owned that it contained many things he thought unanſwerable. Begging to be excuſed, as I had already found my confidence, in ſuch caſes betrayed, he reprobated ſuch conduct, and expreſſed his hope I viewed him in a different light, and that he wiſhed for information from a very different motive. Thus was I induced to lay before him ſo much of the Scripture evidence of the univerſal doctrine, without aſſerting my own full belief of it, though I owned I had been at pains to collect the Scriptures which appear to favour it, and to commit what occurred upon them to writing. He owned that they ſeemed to have weight with them, and that ſome of the paſſages, upon the common ſyſtem, had been often ſtumbling to himſelf. The only objection he made was, that, if ſuch a doctrine were taught, wicked men might be induced to abuſe it to the purpoſes of licentiouſneſs. This was granted; but it was obſerved, that, if the doctrine was of God, which was the chief thing in queſtion, he would ſee to its abuſe. We parted, with a promiſe, on his part, not yet fulfilled, of ſpending an evening with me ſoon; but it is long ſince the maxim has been adopted by the church, that no faith is to be kept with heretics. Of this leaven *more ſtill* remains among us than many are aware of, and *truth alone can purge it* away.

Having made, in the interim, an excurſion to preach the goſpel, to *great ſurpriſe, I found,* at my return, that the converſation had

detailed, and induſtriouſly circulated, with too evident intentions to pr judiſe the public, among whom it ſoon became the topic of general co verſation. You may be ſure ſuch things never loſe in circulation. Th letting of ſeats in our place of worſhip for a year had been juſt intimate and this affair opportunely ſerved to deter the people, and was improve to that purpoſe. To vindicate truth, and put it in the power of the pub lic to judge for themſelves, I thought proper to give a ſhort view, in th following letters, of the leading difficulties that occur in reconciling th common ſyſtem to divine truth. Theſe letters I intended to ſend to th Editor of a certain magazine, in which the Review of Dr Ryland's Ser mon appeared; but, extending beyond my firſt intention, I determined t ſubmit them thus to public inſpection, the mode of publiſhing them be ing quite immaterial. Truth is the great matter in queſtion.

Having lately made another excurſion to the Highlands for a few week the communion happening to be in town meantime, which many fro different quarters attended, ſeveral of the pulpits rung with violent de clamation againſt the univerſal doctrine and its abettors. Both were re preſented in the moſt odious light, and the people warned to beware o them, as the moſt dreadful curſe that can infeſt any of the human rac You may be ſure he who had the temerity to introduce this exotic plan would be involved in its condemnation. The minds of the audience wer agitated, ſome inflamed with indignation, others moved with pity, an not a few excited to treat the idea of limited puniſhment with ridicul The concourſe of people, from various quarters, carried an account of th matter to diſtant diſtricts, and excited every where a general inquiry an ſpeculation about this diabolic doctrine, as it was reputed. By ſuch ze and induſtry, the people are prepared to make it the ſubject of future in veſtigation.

Much has been ſaid; but, if I may credit ſome of the hearers, littl proof offered from Scripture. Some people ſeem to think they have right to be believed without proof. One of the aſſiſting miniſters, who bare word commands the veneration of many, urged, in refutation of th hated doctrine, the words of Moſes to the children of Iſrael, upon th overthrow of the Egyptians, Theſe your enemies, whom ye have ſeen to day, ye ſhall ſee no more for ever. It was branded as the devil's do trine, or coming from that quarter, though it bears none of his feature Thoſe who abet it were repreſented as rending the Bible in pieces, an atheiſts at bottom, whatever they may profeſs. If well informed, token of admiſſion to the ordinance were given to ſeveral, upon expreſs conc tion of never hearing your correſpondent more, as this would be denyin the faith, and acting worſe than infidels. In judging of your correſpon dent's motives and ſervice hitherto in preaching the goſpel, and even his ſtate before God, charity found no place: The whole was ſet in th very worſt light, and aſcribed, by ſome, to the worſt of cauſes. Are the the fruits of that faith which worketh by love? May our Father in heave forgive them.

Theſe are heavy charges; but mere aſſertion or declamation furniſh n argument or proof, though they often paſs as ſuch with ſome, in th mouth of thoſe whom they are accuſtomed to revere as an oracle. Ca the ſpirit of God influence any to judge men or things in direct oppoſitio *the expreſs injunctions* of his word? Does he authoriſe frail mortals

invade the tribunal of their Judge, and there pronounce on what paſses in the receſses of the human heart? This is the province of God alone.

Long before one word was ſpoken of the univerſal doctrine in public, ſome of the ſelf-conſtituted guardians and directors of a riſing generation charged the children, of whom they took the overſight, upon their peril, not to hear me, and threatened to turn off ſome of their colleagues from aſſiſting in teaching the ſabbath-evening ſchools, if they did not deſiſt from treading on ſuch forbidden ground. No doubt they are the men, and ſuch a privilege their monopoly; but unbridled zeal is no mark of genuine Chriſtianity, which, like its Author, pities and courts thoſe that are out of the way.

But even admitting the doctrine to be an error, is it of all others the moſt odious and dangerous? Can theſe men, who ſo rail at it, connive at what they themſelves deem errors in their own church? Is any attempt to open the gates of mercy on mankind, beyond the narrow bounds of this mortal life, the only ſin or error which ſhould find no mercy? One of theſe gentlemen was heard to aſsert to a large audienee, that not above one in ten thouſand was ordained to eternal life, or would be ſaved. Which of the two doctrines does moſt honour to God and is moſt friendly to man? To ſuch as think and preach ſo, no wonder the doctrine of the Reſtoration is obnoxious.—Many were the invidious and groundleſs things that were ſaid, that deſerve not a place on paper:—Strange concomitants of a feaſt of love! Some of the clergy here, however, ſo far as I can learn, took no part in this fray, rightly judging, I ſuppoſe, truth would maintain its ground without the aid of ſuch weapons. And as for the other, they ſhould remember our Lord's admonition, "Judge not that ye be not judged: For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged; and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again," Mat. vii. 1, 2.

I ſoon diſcovered, in the places whither I had gone to preach the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, that word had been ſent to the people, intreating them not to hear me for the Lord's ſake, for that I was propagating the moſt damnable hereſies. It was whiſpered among them, that I denied any puniſhment of the wicked after the day of judgment; that I ſaid Judas would be as happy in the world to come as Peter; and many other things equally unfounded. Having reſolved to ſpeak nothing there of the ſubject in public, my ſilence excited their ſurpriſe: But I found it neceſsary to explain myſelf in private, laying before a few the evidence of the truth, which ſome received with joy, taking a note of the texts referred to till they could find leiſure to examine them. In their Gaelic hymns, which are ſanctioned by the authority of the eſtabliſhed church, they could ſoon point out many paſſages, which appeared to them to countenance the doctrine. And I appeal to you, and to the reader, if the following paſsages, among others to the ſame effect, in the Aſsembly's hymns, do not clearly convey ſuch ſentiments.

With me dwells no relentleſs wrath
  Againſt the human race:
The ſouls which I have made ſhall find
  A refuge in my grace.—
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
  To you, and all mankind.—

His gracious hand ſhall wipe the tears
From every weeping eye;
And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
And death itſelf ſhall die.—
Aſunder burſt the gates of braſs;
The iron fetters fall;
And gladſome light and liberty
Are ſtraight reſtor'd to all.—
So not a word that flows from me
Shall ineffectual fall;
But univerſal nature prove
Obedient to my call.

Theſe mighty zealots, who diſcover ſuch paſtoral care for the poor people, have not traveled into their bounds to give them one ſingle ſermon, though their lack of true knowledge is very great. The laws of men, which forbid this, ſeem to weigh more with them than the law of God, which commands it; and yet they profeſs to be zealous for the purity of his truth.—One of the people who was here at the communion, remarked, Your return, Sir, to G———k is like a man going into a garden full of bees, or putting his head into a bee-hive; ſuch is the odd ferment among the people. Their mode of procedure, however, has leſs honey than poiſon. If men are conſcious they are defending a good cauſe, why have recourſe to Satan's magazine for weapons? Truth muſt reject their aid. We are told that Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil about the body of Moſes, *durſt not* bring againſt him a railing accuſation; and ſurely they who believe the univerſal doctrine are entitled to as much civil uſage from fellow men as that adverſary. May we not apply the exclamation of the Latin poet in another caſe, of which I give almoſt a literal verſion, making free to fill up the couplet.

In heavenly minds can ſuch fierce paſſions dwell?
Does truth divine once deed the aid of hell?

Laſt Lord's day the audience were reſpectable, and in the evening, throng, notwithſtanding all the thunders from the vatican. I felt my mind not a little impreſſed at the beginning of the ſervice; but integrity and truth are a valuable ſhield, ſword, and buckler. May the Lord grant mercy to be faithful to the end, and cauſe his truth to triumph. It is no bad ſign of the truth of a doctrine when it makes manifeſt the latent corruptions of the heart, and produces effects ſimilar to thoſe of the goſpel at its firſt promulgation. Some who would be thought pious zealots for truth, are often heard ſcoffingly to ſay, "O, we may now ſin as we pleaſe, we'll ſoon get out of hell!" What idea can theſe men have of their Maker, who can thus ſneer at the terrors of his wrath, if their antichriſtian views of it are not retained? But they think they are pleading the cauſe of religion, and that their intemperate zeal will cover a multitude of ſins, and procure a paſsport for heaven, without once taſting of the ſecond death. It is not a little remarkable, that both profeſsors and profane are equally hoſtile in general to the doctrine. In my little intercourſe with mankind, I could not help ſometimes wondering how ſuch crooked, *rough, knotty pieces of timber*, as many of them are, could be formed

into veſſels of honour, fitted for the maſter's uſe. And indeed many, under a ſmoother ſurface, are equally diſtant from ſuch a change; for though poliſhed as marble, yet are they alſo like marble hard; but to God all things are poſſible. It is eaſy to give ill names to perſons and things; the bleſſed Author of truth has had his own ſhare of this uſage, and truth itſelf has often paſsed through the ſame ordeal. Peter ſpeaks of the *reſtitution of all things*, the great truth contended for; but inſtead of calling it by that name, many brand it with the moſt odious epithets, ſuch as the doctrine of devils, and the like.

I would not trouble you, dear Sir, or the reader, with theſe things, to which many more of a ſimilar nature might be added, were it not that they ſerve, in my opinion, along with what has been experienced by others, to place the nature of that oppoſition which is uſually given to the doctrine of univerſal reſtoration, and its defenders, in a ſtriking light. Whatever proceeds from God carries its own conviction along with it, and it is little, if at all ſhort of blaſphemy, to father on him the wild effuſions of intemperate zeal. Theſe may impoſe upon ſuperficial obſervers, and procure their authors reputation for doing God eminent ſervice; but we have an unerring rule by which to try them, to which we do well to give heed. The native effects of zeal without knowledge, or of a party ſpirit, partake too much of the nature of briars and thorns, to be miſtaken for what they are not. Our Lord's rule in all ſuch caſes is, "Ye ſhall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles." The ſpirit of the Lord, which is a ſpirit of love and peace, never moves men to a conduct forbidden in his word; and to pretend he does, is lying on the Holy Ghoſt. When the enemy comes in like a flood, he lifts up the ſtandard of truth in the word, and not that of invective, miſrepreſentation, and uncharitable cenſures, which are not of the Father, but of the evil one, who was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth.

Such oppoſition to any doctrine that has ſo much to ſupport it in ſacred writ, inſtead of ſtumbling, ſhould rather ſerve to confirm us in the truth of it; for ſimilar was the oppoſition to the word of God in the mouth of our bleſsed Saviour, and his apoſtles, and that from thoſe who were reputed the moſt religious of the age. Of our Lord himſelf ſome ſaid "He is a good man; others, nay, but he deceiveth the people. He has a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?" And when Paul came to touch the leading prejudice of his audience, the cry was, "Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth, it is not meet that he ſhould live." If we find mercy to copy ſuch examples, we may lay our account with ſimilar treatment, while human nature remains in its preſent ſtate.

Some think it a crime in a miniſter of the goſpel, of which he has as much reaſon to be aſhamed as of theft or adultery, to add to his faith the knowledge and profeſſion of any point in religion that he did not formerly ſee and profeſs; but the wiſeſt and beſt of men have been of a different mind. One of three things which that eminent reformer Luther thought neceſsary in a miniſter of the goſpel is, That he be always learning. And the ſaying of a certain heathen is worthy, in my opinion, of being adopted as a Chriſtian maxim,

"*Life's eve I ſpend* in learning ſomething new."

Our Lord ſaid to his diſciples, "Every ſcribe which is inſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an houſeholder, who bringeth forth out of his treaſure things *new*, and old," Matth. xiii. 22. Are the mines of divine truth yet exhauſted, that this ſhould ceaſe to be the duty and the privilege of any goſpel miniſter? But Chriſtians are now grown ſo wiſe, (I wiſh it be not merely in their own conceits) that they ſeem to think there is nothing new left for them to learn, and that they are already maſters of all the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven.

The veſſel which Peter ſaw in viſion deſcending from the opened heaven to the earth, like a great ſheet, knit at the four corners, contained all manner of four footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air; and with all theſe was received up again into heaven, Acts x. What a repreſentation have we here, inſtructing us, that as all things are from God as Creator, ſo they ſhall all be reſtored to him again; and if the voice of divine truth from heaven, more than twice or thrice, call them thus clean, who has a right to pronounce them *common or unclean?* "What God has cleanſed, that call *ye* not common," leſt ye be found contradicting your Maker. Here God ſpeaks as to our eyes and ears, and the import of his ſymbolic language is not hard to be underſtood, if the word of truth at large is allowed to be the interpreter.

Difficulties there are, and will be found in Scripture, even by the moſt learned and intelligent; and, every thing conſidered, is this ſurpriſing? But the chief, if not the ſole difficulties that occur in expounding the doctrinal parts of Scripture, ariſe, I may venture to aſſert, from the liberties unhappily taken with the plain language in which our heavenly Father addreſſes his children. In order to underſtand that language, as commonly explained, we muſt ſtudy ſome famed human ſyſtem, or reſign our judgment to the guidance of thoſe who profeſs they have done ſo, and acquired licence to be the public inſtructors of others. Theſe privileged guardians and directors of our faith, and their admirers and abettors, block up the highway to heaven with ſo many turnpikes, at which we muſt give up our reaſon, and our right and duty of examining and judging for ourſelves the grounds of our faith, for a ticket entitling us to purſue our journey heavenward. In our nation turnpikes require an act of Parliament ſanctioned by royal authority; but theſe turnpikes are eſtabliſhed in direct oppoſition to the royal law of liberty revealed in the oracles of truth, which makes it the duty and privilege of every man to ſearch the ſacred records for himſelf, and receive and profeſs whatever he believes in his conſcience, upon mature enquiry, and humble prayer to the Father of lights, and dependance on him, to have his mind and will therein revealed. Be the points of a man's faith what they may, if not thus acquired, they bring neither glory to God, nor ſalvation to himſelf. But implicit faith, or believing as the church believes, and for that reaſon, has been always highly eſteemed among men, though an abomination in the ſight of God; and that faith which he highly eſteems is too often reputed execrable by the wiſe and prudent in Iſrael, who will not learn at Chriſt's feet, unleſs ſome brother ſage be admitted as the authoratative interpreter of his words.

Having now got Dr Ryland's famed ſermon into my poſſeſſion, I intended to offer a few farther remarks upon it; but having already en*croached too far, and* learning that a review of it will be publiſhed in

your Miſcellany, this becomes the leſs neceſſary. I cannot but feel ſurpriſed that any ſhould think it concluſive againſt the doctrine of univerſal reſtoration, which it leaves, in my opinion, untouched. It contains a number of juſt remarks on the too common deceits of the human heart, in matters of religion. The author does not ſeem to me to underſtand the doctrine of the Univerſaliſts, which he profeſſes to refute. If that doctrine be ſcriptural, which he does not diſprove, the power and wiſdom of God furniſh a ſufficient anſwer to his queſtions as to time and manner, which may with equal force be urged againſt other parts of the divine procedure.

Much of his reaſoning goes for nought, as applied to the friends of the Reſtoration, who maintain, as well as himſelf, the certainty and ſeverity of future puniſhment. It is uncandid to inſinuate, as is often done, that they deny this. Though "*the higheſt good of the univerſe* requires the avenging of all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs," does it therefore require, that that vengeance ſhould never have a period? This he has not attempted to prove; and would find it a hard taſk if he did. The moſt valuable ends may be anſwered by limited ſufferings, all of which would be excluded if protracted without end. Is it eſſential to the Divine adminiſtration that it ſhould ceaſe to be paternal with regard to the far greater part of God's intelligent offſpring, and remain, as long as he exiſts, vindictive? Are we not told, that he is the Father of mercies, in whom compaſſions flow;—and that he is full of compaſſion? Nothing, therefore, can proceed from him that is foreign to mercy. Nay more, his every act muſt be the reſult of mercy; for as is the fountain, ſo are its ſtreams. Who can conceive the extent of the Divine fulneſs? And if God be full of compaſſion, how can he ſend forth ſuch oppoſite ſtreams as the ſweet waters of endleſs bliſs, and the bitter waters of boundleſs and never-ending woe? But let future puniſhment reſt on the baſis of paternal love, where we would expect the chaſtiſements of a wiſe father to reſt, and be admitted to be corrective throughout, and not vindictive, and we at once ſee the uniformity of God's adminiſtration, and the conſiſtency of his character. Though "the eſſential perfections of his nature require that ſin ſhould be ſeverely puniſhed," yet we know that there is no perfection of his nature that hinders him to pardon it, for the ſake of Jeſus his anointed: And for no other mode of forgiveneſs do we contend. How delightful to ſing, without having recourſe to a quibble, to qualify and reſtrict the ſenſe,

"He died to bear the guilt of men;
That ſin might be forgiven.
He lives to bleſs them, and defend
And plead their cauſe in heaven."

Though God's regard to the happineſs of individuals leads us to conclude that he will puniſh ſin, yet this very regard leads us alſo to hope, that he will not puniſh it eternally; as the happineſs of individuals can never be more complete than when it is conſiſtent with the happineſs of the whole. It is alſo granted, that God's conduct towards the fallen angels manifeſts his determination to puniſh ſin; but neither will this prove the perpetual duration of that puniſhment. The ſame may be ſaid of the ſufferings *of the Mediator, and of* the appointment of the day of judgmer

It is more eaſily aſſerted than proved, that the "only *reſtitution of all things* of which any of the prophets have ſpoken, is that which will be completed at the ſecond coming of Chriſt." It is granted, that "that is the very time of the commencement of the main puniſhment of the wicked, and not of their reſtoration to happineſs:" But there is nothing in Scripture to hinder, but much to encourage, our expecting ſuch an event afterward; for God can, according to his word and promiſe, make all things new and beautiful in their own order and time.

But the argument on which he ſeems to lay chief ſtreſs is, that the ſame term is employed, Math. xxv. 46. to denote the duration of the happineſs of the righteous, and of the miſery of the wicked. "It is extremely improbable," he juſtly remarks, "that the ſame term ſhould mean infinitely more in the laſt clauſe than it did in the preceding. See Rom. v. 15, 18, 19, 20; alſo 1. Corinth. xv. 22, where, if his own rule be applied, he muſt diſcard ſome of the leading doctrines of his own ſyſtem; and many others urge the ſame argument from Math. xxv. 26. who are guilty of the ſame inconſiſtency, over the belly of the Doctor's rule. "Inattention to this rule has introduced much hurtful controverſy in the church. It is againſt the neglect of it that we often find cauſe to object. In the ſame latitude the term can be taken in both clauſes, and yet the reſtoration reſts on a ſolid baſis. As the wicked ſhall then go away to the *age-laſting* puniſhment, which is proved to be the literal meaning of the term, ſo the righteous to the *age-laſting* life, in the New Jeruſalem ſtate, the ſubſtance of the jubilee, which ſhall terminate our Lord's mediatory reign, when he ſhall have dilivered up the kingdom to the Father, but not the bliſs of his people, which ſhall be properly eternal, in the higheſt heavens. But the Doctor, and thoſe who are like-minded, are the laſt who ſhould urge ſuch an objection, becauſe their own peculiar tenets entirely depend on that very mode of interpreting Scripture, which varies the ſenſe of the ſame term in the ſame ſentence or verſe, as appears from their gloſs on the paſſages referred to above. Is not this mode as faulty when employed to ſupport the Doctor's tenets, as thoſe of his oponents? But the latter reject its aid, as making too free with the word of God.

It cannot eſcape an attentive reader of the Doctor's ſermon, that he does not ſo much as attempt to find the leading doctrine he meant to inculcate in the paſſage of Scripture choſen for that purpoſe, as ſpoken by God himſelf. A preacher ſhould at leaſt endeavour to make it appear, that the text on which he has fixed, as the baſis of his diſcourſe, contains the leading truths he would deduce from it; for, let it be ever ſo ingenious, if it be not the offspring of the text, or go far beyond what that authoriſes, we are tempted to think there is no paſſage in the bible to ſupport the doctrine grafted upon it, or that the writer himſelf knew not of any, elſe he would prefer it.—Upon the whole, ſo far as the ſermon reſpects the univerſal doctrine, the leading thing, it would ſeem, the author had in view, it appears to me an entire miſconception or miſrepreſentation of the ſubject, whatever merit it may poſſeſs in other reſpects. But it will paſs very well with ſuperficial thinkers, whoſe creed is already completed, and who are determined, at all hazards, to defend it.

God ſpeaks in his word as to children, and is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he uſes ſuch a mode of expreſſion as needs all the addreſs of the *ſchoolman to adjuſt and* reduce into proper form? Would he countenance,

by his own example, perjury or mental reſervation in his creatures, even upon the moſt ſolemn occaſions, which muſt be the caſe, if his own oath is not to be underſtood in the plain meaning of the terms in which it is expreſſed? The following declarations of Scripture, when my attention was directed to them, appeared quite ſubverſive of the common doctrine, or irreconcilable to each other in their plain and obvious meaning. It is repeatedly aſſerted, and ſometimes even with the ſolemnity of an oath, that *all nations, kindreds, and families of the earth* ſhall be bleſſed in Abraham, and in his ſeed, Meſſiah; that *all kings* ſhall fall down before him; that *all nations* ſhall ſerve him, and call him bleſſed. "O God, thou ſhalt inherit *all nations*—*All nations* whom thou haſt made ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name," Pſal. lxxxii. 8. lxxxvi. 9. "The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God, Pſal. ix. 17. "Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment." Underſtanding theſe different portions of Scripture according to the plain meaning of the language, and they are ſet at irreconcilable variance, ſhall we make free with the oath of God, and ſay, that he means only a very few nations, &c. when he uſes the univerſal term *all?* This is the common gloſs; but ah, what a reflection does it caſt on the Divine character! We have no right to call the truth of God's threatening in queſtion; for the wicked, and *all the nations* that forget him, ſhall be turned into hell, and theſe are not few. Are there any nations whom God has not made? for all that he has made ſhall come and worſhip before him, and glorify his name. But how this ſhall come to paſs, if all the nations that are, and ſhall be turned into hell, remain throughout all duration there, exceeds my comprehenſion; and yet the promiſe and oath of God cannot be broken, nor muſt they be perverted or explained away! But the univerſal doctrine ſolves this difficulty, and the frequent import of the phraſes *for ever* and *everlaſting* fully juſtifies that ſolution. Let conſcience then ſay, who honour God moſt, they who make him equivocate in his very oath, or mean a quite different thing from what he ſpeaks, or thoſe that underſtand his word in uniform conſiſtency with itſelf, and ſhew the perfect harmony that ſubſiſts between the Divine character and adminiſtration, and runs throughout the whole.

This declaration made to Abraham, "In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed," was deemed preaching the goſpel by Paul, Gal. iii. 8. but this character is now denied to it, unleſs in the qualified and very limited ſenſe in which ſome are pleaſed to take it; for the man who would preach that all nations ſhall be bleſſed in Meſſiah, even all the nations whom God has made, or who owe their exiſtence to him, may lay his account to be reputed a groſs heretic. When ſhall the efficacy of that promiſe ceaſe, "I will cleanſe their blood that I have not cleanſed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion;" or, as the margin renders it, "even the Lord that dwelleth in Zion," Joel iii. 21. That all nations ſhall be bleſſed in Chriſt, and yet whole nations be miſerable without end, is a myſtery, or rather flat contradiction, which would ſhock every one, were it not for the prejudice of education that can render any abſurdity venerable.

The following paſſage, in one of Mr Newton's letters, lately attracted my attention: "There is a period approaching, when all that is now rough and crooked ſhall be made plain and ſtreight. The Lord has promiſed it, *and therefore* all his works are repreſented as expecting an

waiting for it. This ſhall be at the manifeſtation of the ſons of God. The curſe ſhall be *fully* removed from the creation; the Lord ſhall create *all things new*, and again pronounce *all things good*; the creature's expectation ſhall be anſwered; it ſhall be *restored to its honour and uſe*. Under what circumſtances, and to what particular purpoſes, this change will take place, we know not; but a change worthy of divine wiſdom, though beyond the limits of our weak apprehenſions, we are warranted from Scripture to expect. It is aſſerted in this paſſage, to which we may probably add 2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 1.

"The hour is coming when the myſterious plan of divine providence ſhall be unfolded, vindicated, and compleated; when it ſhall appear that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is *head and reſtorer* of the creation; and how *fully in every ſenſe* he has repaired the ruin brought into the world by ſin, and deſtroyed *the works of the devil*. As a theatre whereon to diſplay the wonders of his providence and grace, the earth was renewed after the flood, and ſtill continues; but not in its original ſtate—there are marks of the evil of ſin, and of God's diſpleaſure againſt it, wherever we turn our eyes. When the ſons of God ſhall be manifeſted, then ſhall the creature alſo be delivered from the bondage of corruption. But if the ſecret voice of the whole creation deſires the conſummation of *all things*, ſurely they who have the light of God's word and ſpirit will look forward, and long for that glorious day." *

Let this extract be candidly examined, and ſee if it does not contain all that is contended for. I indeed find Mr Newton, in one of his ſermons, attempting to refute the reſtoration, as extended to intelligent beings; but this ſays no more than that men are not always conſiſtent with themſelves, and that the force of truth upon their minds ſometimes carries them beyond the narrow limits of their own ſyſtem. It is evident the Apoſtle did not mean to confine the term *creature* and *creation*, which are the ſame in the original, to the inanimate and irrational parts of the creation; for he himſelf teaches us to view it as equivalent to the *whole creation*, or *every creature*, ver. 22. and that as excluding none but the ſons of God, the firſt fruits and church of the firſt born, they being the pledge and earneſt of the recovery of the reſt of mankind, in due time, to their rightful Lord, at the period of the manifeſtation of the ſons of God, when the reſt "alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Does not this evidently imply deliverance from moral and penal evil, and the poſſeſſion of the oppoſite bleſſings, things of which neither inanimate nature, nor the irrational tribes, are capable.

I find the following conceſſion in a work of the late Dr M'Knight, Edinburgh, when arguing for the perpetuity of future miſery: "At the ſame time I muſt be ſo candid as to acknowledge, that the uſe of the terms *eternal*, *everlaſting*, *forever*, in other paſſages of ſcripture, ſhews that they who underſtand theſe words in a limited ſenſe, when applied to future puniſhment, put no forced interpretation on them. Allowing that eternal punithments are really meant in the threatenings of the goſpel,

* Newton's Cardiphonia, let. 29, entitled, Thoughts on Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21.

no man can deny that God has it ſtill in his power to mitigate and moliſy his threatenings to what degree his infinite wiſdom ſees fit. †"

The argument on which he lays chief weight is, God's oath reſpecting the rebellious Iſraelites; but that oath does not in the leaſt affect the truth of univerſal reſtoration, as expounded by its moſt judicious defenders. Though he grants that the uſe of the terms *forever, eternal, everlasting*, as applied to future miſery, do not prove it to be of unceaſing duration, yet he thinks that "it is by far the ſafeſt part to believe, that eternal puniſhments are threatened in the goſpel againſt impenitent ſinners." But it is certainly ſafeſt to believe the ſcriptures in the ſenſe God intends, and to ſearch them for that purpoſe, than in that ſenſe which may be attached to them by human wiſdom.

If I recollect well, ſome of the Doctor's ſubſequent writings diſcover his ſentiments plainly in favour of the reſtoration; and few of its opponents can come up to him for true learning, and chaſte ſcripture-criticiſm. His view of the phraſe *everlaſting deſtruction*, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. is as repugnant to the common doctrine as that of the Univerſaliſts. But though he had for his colleagues and co-presbyters ſome of the moſt famed for orthodoxy in the Church of Scotland, yet have I never heard that he received any trouble for his ſentiments, or that his writings have been branded ſince his death. Candour and moderation are the native fruit of cool and diſpaſionate enquiry; while bigotry, uncharitable cenſures, and perſecution, reſult from a party ſpirit, and partial views of the merits of a cauſe. "He that walks uprightly walks ſurely."

In the following letters ſimplicity is ſtudied. Though the ſubject furniſhes abundant ſcope for the erudition of the learned, yet is there much of it level to the capacity of the illiterate, when clearly propoſed, and very much adapted to popular inſtruction. It is not eaſy, in preſent circumſtances, to write on the ſubject with Chriſtian meekneſs and moderation, however much it is calculated to beget univerſal benevolence. There is ſome unripe corn, indeed, that needs, as the prophet ſpeaks, a ſharp threſhing inſtrument, with teeth, to ſeparate the grain from the ſtraw and the chaff.

Though my name has appeared prematurely in your Miſcellany, which has occaſioned ſome uneaſineſs, yet you have now leave to make ſuch uſe of it, and of this publication, as you may think moſt conducive to the ſacred intereſt of truth. The nature and bounds of this performance could not admit of much reſearch, it being only a ſhort outline of what was written for my own inſtruction, and the inſpection of a friend; but ſuch as it is I commit it to God, whoſe cauſe I wiſh to plead and defend; and in it contribute my mite to the revival of a glorious doctrine, which has been too long buried under the rubbiſh of a ſyſtematic divinity. I am not without hope, that this doctrine, ſo obnoxious to thoſe who underſtand it not, may yet be the mean, through the divine bleſſing, of cementing the diviſions of Zion, counteracting the ſpread of infidelity, and fanning the expiring embers of Chriſtian love into an ardent flame.—That ſuch may be its bleſſed fruits, let us abound more and more in the prayer of faith to God, and in the labours and kind offices of brotherly love to men; thus ſhall we put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men,

† *Truth of the Goſpels, p. 138.*

one of whoſe objections againſt the doctrine is, that it is unfriendly to the purpoſes of piety and holineſs, and embraced by few who have religion at heart. Praying the Lord may ſucceed all your labours from the pulpit and the preſs, for the advancement of true and undefiled religion in the world, and promote the cauſe you ſo laudably defend, and the love, purity, and uſefulneſs of all that befriend it, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your cordial friend and brother,

in the Goſpel of our Lord and Saviour,

N. Douglas.

Greenock, Sept. 3 1801.

AN

Antidote againſt Deiſm.

LETTER I.

I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt—I am ſet for the defence of the goſpel—Stand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel.—Rom. i. 16. Phil. i. 17. 27.

DEAR SIR,

THE perſon to whom properly belongs the honourable character of a Chriſtian, will deem the knowledge and poſſeſſion of divine truth the moſt valuable of all treaſures. Actuated by this perſuaſion, the acquiſition of truth will be a main object of his daily prayers and purſuit. So far as this object is attained, he will not let it go, but hold it faſt, whatever this may coſt him. Neither will he walk in craftineſs, nor handle the word of God deceitfully, artfully concealing or diſguiſing it; but rather, by a faithful manifeſtation of the truth, commend himſelf to every man's conſcience, as in the ſight of God. Viewing things in this light, he will not receive any thing in religion upon truſt, but will examine the doctrines of men by the light of ſcripture, knowing if they ſpeak not according to the law and teſtimony, it is becauſe there is no truth in them, at leaſt ſo far as they recede from that unerring ſtandard, be they ever ſo ſound in the faith in other points. He that is of God heareth God's words.

We may refine upon the oracles of truth, by changing the plain meaning of words and expreſſions, till they loſe their original import, or are brought to convey a quite different ſenſe. This is often done, and may diſcover no ſmall addreſs in the art of what is called expounding ſcripture. But we may admit it as a general rule, fit to be adhered to in every caſe, that when any word or phraſe is to be taken in a ſenſe different from what it literally means, there is ſomething in the text or context, or in the uſe of that word or phraſe elſewhere in ſcripture, to direct to the proper ſenſe. Were not this the caſe we would be left quite at the mercy of every pretender to ſcripture-criticiſm, and there would be nothing more vague and uncertain than the language of inſpiration, which would render it of no effect to regulate and eſtabliſh our faith. But no man can admit this, who believes the neceſſity and reality of a revelation of the will of God to men, as the unerring and unalterable ſtandard of their faith and practice. If one may take the liberty to explain away this paſſage of ſcripture, another that, and a third ſome other paſſage, to accommodate them to their own views, at this rate what ſhall become of the ſacred volume; for every one may explain the whole as may beſt ſuit his own peculiar ſyſtem, and thus the way of God is made of none effect by this arbitrary mode of interpretation.

cording to the views men entertain of the character and adminiſtration of the Moſt High, will be their diſpoſitions and carriage towards him and their fellow creatures; for wrong views on that ſubject have been the fertile ſource of much ſuperſtition, miſchief, and irreligion in the world.

Peruſing, dear Sir, your Magazine of May laſt, I find a review of a late ſermon, which has acquired ſome celebrity, and of which you expreſs your cordial approbation. Having yet ſeen no [illegible] of the ſermon but the extracts you have given, I can form no juſt opinion of the merits of the whole; theſe, however, ſhew the author to be a perſon of talents, and not unworthy of the fame he has acquired in the circle of his religious acquaintance.

My object in writing you is not to animadvert on the ſermon itſelf, as that would be unfair, without having coolly examined the whole performance; I ſhall however beg leave to remark, that the peculiar tenet of thoſe whom the Doctor oppoſes, refutes the *firſt lie* as effectually as that which he defends, ſo far as the ſacred text is concerned, to which we have no right to make any addition of our own. The falſe and bold aſſertion of Satan to Eve, upon which the diſcourſe is founded, "Ye ſhall not ſurely die," Gen. iii. 4. refers evidently to the divine threatening, Gen. ii. 17. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die," or, as the margin renders it, *dying thou ſhalt die.* Thoſe that hold the doctrine of the Reſtoration maintain, as well as the author, that the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die; that the wages of ſin is death, even the ſecond death; and that there is no deliverance from it, but by the exerciſe of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and ſo far they have no particular concern in Satan's lie. Candour required the acknowledgement of this, that the reader might not be impoſed upon by a ſhew of unfounded reaſoning, puſhed beyond its due limits, where there was no difference of ſentiment.

The death threatened in the prohibition doubtleſs implied the loſs of God's moral image, which immediately ſucceeded Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion; the miſeries conſequent on the fall in this life; and the diſſolution of the human frame by natural death: But that it imported any thing beyond this will be difficult, if not impoſſible, to prove from ſcripture. As by the firſt Adam came death to this extent; ſo by the ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven, came alſo the reſurrection of the dead; ſo that the reſurrection, even of the wicked, is a fruit of his mediation, 1 Cor. xv. 21. Without the reſurrection of the body, man could not be ſubjected to the ſecond death in his complete perſon, which ſeems to be the condemnation peculiarly attached to the rejection of the goſpel. That life and immortality, which are brought to light by the goſpel, had not been revealed to Adam prior to his fall; and we have therefore no reaſon to think that God would threaten and judge him, by the laws of a diſpenſation which, in relation to him, did not then exiſt. The Judge of all the earth will always do right, though his guilty creature man will ſeldom do him the honour to allow this.

The univerſal doctrine does not ſay to the wicked and impenitent, Ye ſhall not die, *as is generally inſinuated.* It threatens them with a miſery beyond the

grave, commenſurate to the degree and aggravations of their guilt, and with a loſs that can never be repaired; though it repreſents Chriſt as the reſurrection and the life from every death and grave to which ſin expoſes, before he terminate his reign.

Thus, ſo far was the death threatened from including miſery without end in the next world, it does not ſeem to me to have intended the miſery of that ſtate at all. Infants are thus far concerned in the penalty threatened for eating the forbidden fruit, which ſhews their need of a Saviour in common with the adult, and we ſee them daily paying the forfeiture; but does this oblige us to admit, that he will viſit the effects of the firſt tranſgreſſion upon them to all eternity, as many maintain, or beyond what can be proved to be included in the ſentence, as attached to Adam himſelf? Before men venture to make this a part of the Divine plan, they ſhould be very certain they have ſufficient authority for it in the holy Scriptures. If the word of God does not authoriſe us to ſay, that all who die in infancy ſhall be ſaved, I am certain that it gives us no authority to maintain, that they ſhall be all eternally damned, merely for Adam's firſt ſin, a very few excepted. On ſuch a ſubject, men ſhould have the modeſty to be ſilent, if they cannot produce expreſs authority to pronounce decidedly on the fate of ſo great a proportion of their fellow creatures; or if they ſpeak, it ſhould be on the ſide of mercy, if there is nothing in the character or word of God to forbid it. Thus they who make the effects of the curſe, entailed by the firſt ſin, to purſue infants beyond the grave, and even for ever, do not ſeem to me to have a ſingle portion of Scripture, properly underſtood, to ſupport their hypotheſis; for the ſecond death appears to be the conſequence only of actual tranſgreſſion, unrepented of and unpardoned in the preſent ſtate. It is truly amazing, that any who have acceſs to read that God is love, and the Father of mercies, who is full of compaſſion, and in whom compaſſions flow, ſhould entertain and inculcate ſuch ſentiments of his character and adminiſtration, as a matter to be believed, while they maintain that there is mercy with him for the chief of ſinners, and that he is no reſpecter of perſons *.

* Some object to the above view of the nature and extent of Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion, and its effects with regard to infants, as denying original ſin. With them, that ſin chiefly conſiſts in ſubjecting all infants, without exception, to eternal death, merely on account of Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion, from which they ſuppoſe none delivered that die in infancy, but a few elect infants. To deny this they repute a denial of the doctrine itſelf, though there are no two things more diſtinct. We may admit and maintain original ſin, ſo far as the ſcriptures reveal its nature and effects, and yet deny ſuch to be its conſequence. Thoſe who maintain that conſequence, let them produce one ſingle proof of it from the word of God, our only rule of faith in ſuch caſes. That word ſays, that we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, to render an account of the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad, and to receive accordin to them---that as we now ſow we ſhall hereafter reap, and give an account of the talents committed to our truſt, to occupy till he come; none of which can apply to thoſe who die in infancy. But will not the Judge of all the earth do right? Will he condemn them to endleſs woe, without the formality even of a trial? Such a conduct be far from him.

The application of that paſſage, Pſal. cxxvii. 3. to this purpoſe, has been objected to---"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward." It has been objected, that this is the heritage and the reward he gives to his faithful people (a ſanctified ſenſe of the text) not a heritage and reward which he receives from his heavenly Father. Have not many good people been childleſs? and do not the wicked often abound in chil-

I was ſtruck with one of the arguments urged in the extracts, in proof of the eternity of future puniſhments, viz. God's *infinite hatred of ſin.* This argument is much more concluſive, if I miſtake not, when urged by the opponents of the common doctrine, as a reaſon for the total and final deſtruction of all moral evil. God is as eſſentially preſent in hell as in heaven; and hell is ſaid to be naked before him, and deſtruction to have no covering. Does not the total deſtruction of ſin out of the univerſe, if in a way that magnifies the Lord Jeſus, and glorifies every attribute of Deity, ſerve much more to eviace his infinite abhorence of it, than his permitting it to exiſt for ever before his eyes, though it ſhould be

But if we view children, even all the fruit of the womb, as given to Chriſt, as an heritage and reward for humbling himſelf ſo far as to paſs through childhood and youth, in order to purchaſe and reclaim theſe to himſelf, we ſee in the paſſage a glorious and extenſive grant, confirmed by other parts of ſcripture. "God hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed *heir of all things.*" Heb. i. 1, 2. Here is a more extenſive grant, which neceſſarily includes the former. If children are an heritage of the Lord, or Meſſiah's inheritance, even the fruit of the womb his reward, though unbelief may for a time alienate this in the adult, and ſin corrupt it, does this oblige him to relinquiſh his right in that inheritance to the devil, and ſo violate his Father's appointment of him to be heir of, or to inherit, *all things?* He would be aſhamed to be called their heir, or to accept an appointment for that purpoſe, did he mean always to have the greateſt part of the nobleſt of them under the dominion of ſin, Satan, and the ſecond death.

On the extent of the effects of original ſin, the Author made up his mind many years ago. A ſermon of Dr Doddridge, preached on the death of one of his own children, and alſo a ſermon of Mr Newton in his Meſſiah, firſt led him to examine the common view of that ſubject, and to embrace that which both theſe worthy men plainly approve, as agreeable to the ſpirit of the goſpel, and no where contradicted in the word of God. The laſt of theſe authors ſays, that "for his part he is willing to believe the ſalvation of all who die in infancy till the word of God forbid him."

That eminent man, Dr Watt, in his loſs and recovery of mankind ſinners, the title I think of the work, not venturing to go ſo far, rather than admit that any who die in infancy ſhall be miſerable in the world to come, throws out a ſuppoſition, that all the non-elect infants ſhall be annihilated. But the liberal and benevolent plan of God makes no ſuch ſuppoſition neceſſary, though the narrow ſchemes of men may. The Author publiſhed his view reſpecting the future ſtate of infants, in his Miſſionary Sermon on Meſſiah's glorious reſt, and never heard that that view gave offence to any, though his favouring the doctrine of the Reſtoration makes it now offenſive to ſome. He was glad to find, on peruſing M'Lean's defence of the doctrine, of original ſin lately publiſhed, that the reſpectable body of Chriſtians, with whom that author ſtands connected, view that doctrine in the ſame light in which he himſelf has been led to underſtand it.

But the damnation of infants is the natural conſequence of abſolute predeſtination. Nor is the damnation of infants more unjuſt than that of the adult, if the common creed be true, which makes that to turn on the imputation of a ſin committed many ages before they exiſted. According to the common doctrine, every child of Adam is born under a ſentence of condemnation to eternal death, ſo that the ſentence of the laſt day, with regard to the wicked, only confirms it, ſurcharged with the guilt of actual ſins. If none can be ſaved but the elect, then, according to ſome, all that die in infancy muſt periſh, as they cannot poſſeſs the ſcripture characters of the elect. Theſe are faith, they are choſen to ſalvation through belief of the truth; they are to make their light ſhine before men; they are to put on bowels of compaſſion as the elect of God; they are to act here in ſome meaſure as kings and prieſts, as an earneſt of what they are to be and do hereafter: and they are ſaid to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. If none can be numbered among the elect who do not anſwer to theſe ſcripture characters, it it evident that none who die in infancy or non-age can be the elect in that ſenſe, and that all who are not the elect ſhall not periſh, if we would not give up all that die in non-age to the wicked ere. Extenſive and fatal as the fruits of the firſt apoſtacy are, we would however gladly ſing, with the poet on the ſame ſubject,

Yet mighty God thy wondrous love
Can make our nature clean,
Whilſt Chriſt and grace prevail above
The tempter, death, and ſin

The ſecond Adam ſhall reſtore
The ruin of the firſt;
Hoſannah to that ſov'reign Power

puniſhed with never-ceaſing torment? It is admitted, that this torment is inflicted in a way, however, that will not glorify juſtice, the attribute chiefly concerned, becauſe it can never fully ſatisfy its demands; and alſo in a way that entirely excludes all the claims of mercy, which is ſaid to endure and to be built up for ever, and to rejoice againſt, or be exalted over judgment. God's infinite hatred of ſin may, with equal propriety, in my opinion, be urged againſt the pardon of ſin in any caſe, and for puniſhing it always on the perſon of the tranſgreſſor himſelf.

Some tell us, that one drop of Chriſt's blood was ſufficient to redeem ten thouſand worlds, and yet they will not allow the whole to have redeemed one world. Upon this ſuppoſition, much of it muſt have been ſhed in vain, and the juſtice of God muſt have exacted unſpeakably more than was neceſſary; and yet God neither does nor requires any thing in vain. Thus human wiſdom attempts ſometimes to magnify the merits of our Lord's death, at the expence of divine juſtice, and would, at other times, magnify that juſtice, to the entire ſuppreſſion of mercy. What God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder; and he hath forbidden us to ſeparate mercy from any of his works, by declaring that his tender mercies are over all his works, Pſal. cxlv. 9. Our Lord, who certainly beſt knows the object of his appearing among men, tells us, "I came not to judge the world, but to ſave the world, John xii. 47. Here he makes no diſtinction between the world he came to judge, and that which he came to ſave; and we have no right to make any, unleſs the Spirit of God has made it ſomewhere elſe to our hand. Chriſt well knew the extent of his commiſſion, and blamed none for enlarged views of it, which he would not fail to do, had theſe been unfounded. "We know that this indeed is the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world," ſaid the people of Samaria, a title by which Meſſiah was then known among them, John iv. 42. To be the Saviour of the world, or of the Jews and Gentiles, is the ſame as to be the Saviour of all mankind; whence an angel declared, that the account of his birth was to be good tidings of great joy to *all people*. The great Father of all well knows how to ſhow his hatred of ſin and love to the ſouls which he has made; two things never inconſiſtent with each other in the wiſe plan of his procedure, though often ſet at variance by men, through the partial view they take of his adminiſtration. "Thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it, or me, from the pit of corruption; for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back," was the ſaying of good Hezekiah, when God reverſed the ſentence of death which had gone forth againſt him, Iſa. xxxviii. 17. It is love in God that delivers from any pit of corruption, and leads him to caſt the ſins of his people behind his back. In hell, however, ſins are before his face, as they are ſaid to be till remitted, where, we may ſuppoſe, he does not love always to keep them, but rather to caſt them where they ſhall never more riſe to view. "Thou haſt ſet our iniquities before thee, our ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance," Pſal. xc. 8.

God's infinite hatred of ſin, no leſs than his love to his people, will induce him, we may belive, not to retain their iniquities always before him, nor the ſecret ſins *in the light of his* countenance.

A proper knowledge of the doctrine which the author combats in his diſcourſe, as ſtated by its moſt judicious defenders, would entirely ſupercede the ſtring of queſtions, which he ſeems to think ſo formidable, if not unanſwerable, and may probably be thought ſo by others. It would, however, be doing more eſſential ſervice to Chriſtianity to attempt to reconcile the ſeemingly diſcordant voice of truth, than to ſtart puzzling queſtions, which might exceed Solomon's wiſdom to ſolve. But on the extracts I proceed no farther.

Having paid conſiderable attention to the important ſubject of future puniſhment, whether corrective or purely vindictive; a queſtion in which every perſon, in one form or other, is much concerned. And having alſo cooly weighed the argument on either ſide, in the ſcales of divine truth, I heſitate not to own, that to reconcile the Scriptures to the common doctrine of the eternal exiſtence and triumph of ſin and miſery, under the divine adminiſtration, exceeds my comprehenſion. The time was indeed, when the common ſolution of the difficulties which occur on that ſubject ſatisfied, at leaſt no other were ſought. But viewing theſe in the light of the ſacred records themſelves, and comparing one portion of Scripture with its parallel, a number of the plaineſt texts appear quite ſubverſive of the common opinion. The uſual mode of reconciling them to it ſeems to me to affect Chriſtianity itſelf, by deſtroying, or greatly impairing an eſſential branch of the evidence on which the credibility of the ſacred records reſts, and the certainty of their report. An undue deference to human ſyſtems, which cannot be depended on, unleſs their authors had a full view of the whole extent of the divine plan, prevents the candid ſearch and interpretation of the holy Scriptures. We can never underſtand them to purpoſe, while we view them through a diminiſhing glaſs, and conſider the language of men as too full and expreſſive to convey the great things of God, whoſe judgments are a great depth.

Viewing things in the ſtrong light expreſſed above, I may be allowed, without breach of charity, candidly to propoſe a few of my difficulties, which admit of many queſtions, much more intereſting, in my humble opinion, than thoſe of the venerable Doctor referred to above. We are all concerned to find a ſatisfactory ſolution, that we make not the ſacred volume the ſubject of ridicule to thoſe who reject its authority, a book of ſtrange paradoxes, and our comments on it a ſtumbling block to the blind. When God is the ſpeaker, the moſt ſolemn deference is due to his language. We muſt be very careful that we aſcribe not to him what would be deemed weakneſs, duplicity, or cruelty, even in any human character. If profeſſors will not candidly examine the ground of their belief, and let Scripture ſpeak for itſelf, others will do it for them with little delicacy, and impute to the whole ſcheme of revealed religion what attaches only to partial and defective views of it, or to the corruptions grafted upon it in theory and practice. To theſe may be aſcribed much of the infidelity that unhappily prevails in the world, to the ruin of many.

The reverence ſome profeſs for the Scriptures, whence they cannot bear received doctrines ſhould be brought to their teſt, or, more properly ſpeaking, the *reverence they have for* theſe doctrines, which man has canonized, by the au-

thority of that ſacred ſtandard, does neither themſelves, nor the cauſe of truth, any honour, and plainly indicates their fears that it cannot bear the trial of free and impartial inquiry. Chriſtianity never was, and never will be, much indebted to ſuch defenders, who have done it more injury than all its avowed enemies. How ſhall we try all, and hold faſt that which is good, if we yield to the fears of ſuch men, or allow ourſelves to be detered from the ſearch of truth, by their noiſy clamours and unſcriptural cenſures, theſe carnal weapons, in handling which many are ſo dexterous. The Lord requires no ſuch ſacrifice at our hands; for he invites us to come and reaſon the matter even with himſelf; in which too few of his profeſſed people are diſpoſed to copy his example. Too truly does the prophet deſcribe the conduct of many of them, and with too much juſtice does he exhort us to beware of their ſnares. "They hunt every man his brother with a net.—The beſt of them is as a brier; the moſt upright is ſharper than a thorn hedge. Truſt ye not in a friend; a man's enemies are the men of his own houſe;" or who profeſs to be of the ſame houſhold of faith, Mic. vii. So the Lord of glory himſelf found, and ſo will all experience who live godly in a preſent evil world. And ſuch enemies have it in their power to inflict much deeper wounds than perſons who make no profeſſion of religion.

Being once artfully intangled in their net, when they have fiſhed out of him the grounds of his ſcruples and difficulties, without examining their weight, or regarding their reaſonableneſs, againſt which they ſhut their eyes, they go away, and expoſe him to every one they meet as an heretic. Thus they cover him, as Nero of old did the Chriſtians, with the ſkin of a wild beaſt, and hunt dogs upon him, that he may be intimidated, and his voice drowned by their cries, or be borne down by their violence, never more to riſe. In ſuch a manner was David treated, and alſo David's Lord, who is called, in the title of the 22d Pſalm, "The hind of the morning;" and ſuch reproches broke the heart of both. The former they betrayed under his own roof; "Mine enemies ſpeak evil of me. And if he come to ſee me, he ſpeaketh vanity; his heart gathereth iniquity to itſelf; when he goeth abroad he telleth it," Pſal. xli. 5. 6. And often did the greateſt zealots in his day attempt to enſnare the other in his words; but his infinite wiſdom was more than a match for their craftineſs. By ſuch a generation of vipers was he often attacked in his life, and they at laſt ſucceeded in ſtinging him to death. With virulence did they attempt to blaſt his character, and counteract the benign deſigns of his miſſion and goſpel. Such was the aim and effort, not ſo much of the openly wicked and profane, as of thoſe that were reputed the brighteſt ornaments of the Jewiſh church for piety and learning, and ſhared her emoluments, and the confidence and admiration of the people. The fear of loſing theſe made them cry, with regard to the Meſſiah when he came, "Lo, this is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance ſhall be ours."—As in other things, ſo doubtleſs in judging and cenſuring our brethren, we ought to let our moderation be known to all men, becauſe the Lord, the proper judge, is at hand, who will rejudge every cauſe, and weigh its merits in an equal balance. Then all iniquity, as aſhamed, ſhall ſhut her mouth.

Many are very ready to attach the epithet hereſy to a doctrine they either underſtand not, or will not candidly examine. Paul himſelf did not eſcape this cenſure, the habile weapon of bigots in every age. "This I confeſs, that after the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." Acts xxiv. 14. The ſame thing is charged, at this day, as a hereſy on thoſe who plead for a reſtitution of all things.—Believing, Sir, that you are a friend to truth in general, and cordially wiſh its ſpread and triumph in the earth, I hope you will give place in your Miſcellany to this communication, which appears to your correſpondent in the moſt ſerious light, and will, he is perſuaded, to all that beſtow due attention on the ſubject. Apprehending this communication might not find place in the Magazine for which it was originally intended, owing to its unexpected length, and alſo to the nature of the ſubject, it is thought proper thus to publiſh it. The addreſs is however retained. The reader is intreated to take the trouble of conſulting the paſſages quoted or referred to in their connection in his Bible; looking up to the Father of lights for the teaching of his ſpirit, to lead into all truth. As your Magazine is read by many who love truth, he hopes, for its own ſake, they will not deem it improper to direct their attention to the grand ſource of all divine truth, the Holy Scriptures. Should the reſult be a firmer conviction of the truth of their former views, they will thus have an opportunity to defend them, and to reſtore, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, any of their brethern that may be in danger of ſwerving from the right path. The cauſe of truth may reap ſome advantage from ſuch communications, without any detriment to the exerciſe of brotherly love. The word of God muſt be conſiſtent throughout, no paſſage contradicting another, could we be ſo happy as to diſcover that conſiſtency. He who endeavours to trace it, in the ſpirit of truth, though men ſhould oppoſe and revile him for the attempt, will yet receive the approbation of his Maſter, and of thoſe who are like-minded. But ſo long as men receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God;—ſo long as they love the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God;—and ſo long as all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's;—look every man on his own things, and not alſo on the things of others, how can they believe what the Lord reveals in his word, or maintain a converſation becoming the goſpel?

If this is admitted, you may expect ſome farther communication on the ſubject. Praying the Father of lights may direct and bleſs all our reſearches after truth. I remain,

Dear Sir, &c.

LETTER II.

I have ſeen folly in the prophets, they cauſed my people Iſrael to err. The prophets of Jeruſalem walk in lies, they ſtrengthen the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedneſs. Jer. xxiii.

Walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled. Iſa. l. 11.

DEAR SIR,

I Think we may ſafely admit it as a certain rule, in all our enquiries after divine truth, That no paſsage of ſcripture can reſemble the heathen oracles, which were couched in ſuch equivocal expreſſions, as to be capable of a double, if not of two quite oppoſite meanings. This ambiguity was very favourable to the cauſe of the father of lies, and ſerved to ſecure the credit of his reſponſes among his votaries. The ſame artful management may be ſeen in his temptation of our Lord in the wilderneſs of Judea; and by ſimilar addreſs the cauſe of error is maintained in every age. But truth needs no ſubterfuge, and dreads no ſcrutiny; for, like tried gold, it gains by the cloſeſt inſpection. Satan's aim is to darken, deceive, and deſtroy; but God's great object, on the contrary, is to enlighten, reclaim, and ſave. He ſpeaks to us as to children, not only with affection, but in all the ſimplicity of language. Whatever difficulties of another nature may occur in the ſacred volume, we may aſſure ourſelves that every doctrine is ſo clearly expreſsed, as not to exceed the capacity of any humble diſciple when taught from above. But the plaineſt truths, or the cleareſt counſels of heaven, may be darkened by words without knowledge. Hence babes in Chriſt ſometimes diſcover and receive what eſcapes the wiſe and prudent, or excites their jealouſy and reſentment. I think we may reſt aſsured, our beneficent Creator would not reveal any doctrine in his word, in terms that need the aid of any thing like quirk or quibble, in order to its being underſtood in the ſenſe which he intended. Our fellow-men would be juſtly offended at us, if we took the liberty to explain away their plaineſt words and expreſſions, even in matters of importance; and have we a right to take ſuch liberty with God's word, though guarded on every hand againſt it by the moſt awful ſanctions? May the Lord enable us to keep this in our eye, in writing and peruſing the letters meant to be thus communicated!

After much enquiry, and cool examination of the ſubject, looking up daily to the Father of lights for direction, the following things appear to me neceſſary to be done, before the doctrine of the reſtitution of *all things* can be ſatisfactorily overturned, and the common doctrine, that ſtands in oppoſition to it, eſtabliſhed on a ſcripture baſis; and if it really reſt on that baſis, will it be hard for thoſe who know their Bible to make this appear? They are invited to evince what they deem truth from the word of truth. It muſt be proved from ſcripture,

That there are countleſs millions, even of the nobleſt of God's creatures, that he did not create for his own pleaſure; or if he did, that he will loſe his end in

creating them; or that he will take pleaſure in the death of thoſe of them that periſh, which he utterly diſclaims. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created," Rev. iv. 11. "My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.—According to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will," Iſa. xlvi. 10. Eph. i. 11. "As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked," Ezek. xxxiii. 11. It muſt be proved,

That God never loved the whole of his intelligent offspring; no not even thoſe of them who were created holy and happy; or that the immutable God, with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning, James i. 17. has changed his mind, with regard to the far greater number of his intelligent creatures. God loves ſinners with a love of pity and compaſſion, which brings them in time to be objects of his complacential love. "God ſo loved the world," &c. John iii. 16. "And God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good," Gen. i. 31. "When the morning ſtars ſang together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy," Job xxxviii. 7. "I am the Lord, I change not," Mal. iii. 6. It is morally impoſſible that God ſhould hate any creature, viewed as his own workmanſhip; though he cannot but hate the works of the devil, theſe plants which he has not planted, and which he has determined to root up and deſtroy. It muſt be proved,

That God's conduct towards thoſe who die in unbelief ſhall then ceaſe to be paternal, and that all puniſhment beyond death is wholly vindictive, without the leaſt mixture of corrective love. Does not God plainly aſſert the contrary, when he tells us, That he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over *all his works?* Pſal. cxlv. 9. Are not ſinners as much his works, or his creatures on the other ſide of death as on this? and is not the miſery they endure his work of puniſhment, though indeed what he calls his ſtrange work? Who then has given us a right, in plain contradiction to his word, to aſſert that mercy ſhall never have the leaſt concern with either? It is generally granted, that all puniſhment on this ſide the grave is corrective, and calls upon ſinners to break off their ſins by repentance; but maintained, by the patrons of the common doctrine, that all puniſhment in the ſtate to come is entirely vindictive, without the leaſt regard to the ſinner's good. Thus God is repreſented as changing in the principle and end of his adminiſtration, every twinkling of an eye, or as often as an impenitent ſinner departs this life; a notion that does him little honour, beſides flatly contradicting his own declaration, "I change not." He is of one mind, and who or what can turn him? Let common ſenſe ſay, if ſuch ſudden tranſitions be conſiſtent with the nature of a perfect being, to whom nothing is unforeſeen. It muſt be proved,

That the deſtruction of ſin, Satan, death, and the grave or hell, as the moſt glorious diſplay of Meſſiah's power, is conſiſtent with their eternal exiſtence, and deſpotic reign over unknown millions of beings; and that the ſecond death, and its grave are entirely out of the queſtion, that remaining unimpaired in its *ſting, and dominion* for ever. The texts are plain and expreſs which aſ-

ſert that deſtruction. Chriſt bruiſed, or cruſhed Satan's head under his own heel, and as the God of peace bruiſes him under the feet of all his people. But that he ſhould for ever ſurvive ſo many bruiſes, and retain his ſting and power to the inexpreſſible torment of the far greater part of God's intelligent creation, even without end, is no ſmall myſtery. We are told that Chriſt took part of fleſh and blood, "that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil," Heb. ii. 14. Can we prove that the apoſtle had not all mankind in his eye, in the firſt clauſe of the verſe, when he ſaith, "Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame?" "He will ſwallow up death in victory," Iſa. xxv. 8. The old verſion renders it, "He will ſwallow up death for evermore." The words of the Lord, by the prophet, are remarkable, "I will ranſom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction; repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes," Hoſ. xiii. 14. As the term death includes future miſery, ſo the original word rendered grave, ſignifies alſo hell, and is often ſo tranſlated on the margin. If the Lord himſelf has not excluded the ſecond death and its grave, what right have we to exclude them? Our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt is ſaid to have aboliſhed death, which muſt include, if not intend, the ſecond death, becauſe contraſted with that life and immortality which are brought to light through the goſpel, 2 Tim. i. 10. Sin is the work of the devil, and death its offſpring, and the Son of God was manifeſted for the expreſs purpoſe of deſtroying the works of the devil, and will not ceaſe to work till he has accompliſhed that purpoſe, 1 John iii. 8. Our Lord is introduced by John, as declaring from his throne in the New Jeruſalem, after the church of the firſt-born is glorified as a bride adorned for her huſband, "There ſhall be no more death," Rev. xxi. 4. What death is it that ſhall then exiſt, and to which conſequently he muſt refer? Paul ſolves this queſtion, by telling us, that he is the laſt enemy that ſhall exiſt in the univerſe. Reading 1 Cor. xv. 26. without the ſupplement, which quite changes its meaning, or as the Spirit of God gave it, it runs, "The laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, death," or, more emphatically, *that death*. Our Lord ſhall put down *all rule*, and *all authority*, and *power*; "for he muſt reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," where they cannot reign, and whence they ſhall not be permitted to reign, ver. 24, 25. Can all theſe enemies then, and all their rule, power, and authority, be put down, and yet reign; be deſtroyed, and yet live? With as much conſiſtency may we aſſert, that Pharaoh reigned in his capital in Egypt, after he was drowned in the Red Sea; or that the late king of France ſtill holds the reins of government in that nation. Chriſt is a rock, whoſe work is perfect; for he is the Lord at the Father's right hand, who ſhall ſtrike through theſe kings alſo in the day of his wrath, Pſal. cx. 5.—Thoſe who defend the common doctrine, muſt alſo prove,

That the plaineſt of God's promiſes are not to be taken in their obvious meaning, no not his very oath, ſo that when he uſes the moſt general and unlimited terms, in order to underſtand them aright, we muſt diveſt them of their

univerſality, and reduce them to the ſtandard of ſome human ſyſtem. Is this treating our Maker with due reverence? Where is the man that would chuſe ſuch liberty to be taken with his own expreſſions? Does not the Lord expreſs the truth as he thinketh in his heart? an eſſential trait in the character of a citizen of Zion. They muſt likewiſe prove, would they eſtabliſh the common doctrine,

That the firſt fruits, as applied to men, whatever they might intend of old, have no connection with the whole harveſt; and ſo far from ſecuring the final poſſeſſion of it to the great Huſbandman, only inſures the uninterrupted and eternal poſſeſſion of it to the devil. The ordinance of the firſt-fruits we have in the xxiii of Leviticus. Theſe once preſented to God, as there directed, ſecured and ſet apart the proprietor the whole harveſt. So ſays Cruden, in his concordance, on the article Firſt-fruits. Deſcribing the manner of their oblation, he adds, *After this, every one might begin their harveſt. This was offered in the name of the whole nation, and by this the whole harveſt was ſanctified unto them.* The firſt-fruits were a type or figure of the elect, or the church of the firſt-born, as we are taught by the apoſtles. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we ſhould be a kind of firſt-fruits of his creatures," James i. 18. Some would reſtrict this to the apoſtles, as if they were to be viewed as a kind of firſt-fruits to the reſt of the elect, intended here by *his creatures*. This gloſs is forced and quite unfounded. It is uſual with the apoſtles to ſpeak of the whole church of the faithful in every age as one aggregate body, which they ſometimes expreſs by the pronoun *we*, including themſelves. "Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery; *we* ſhall not all ſleep, but *we* ſhall all be changed," 1 Cor. xv. 51. Paul and his co-temporaries died, but he refers to the ſaints, who ſhall be found alive at Chriſt's ſecond coming, whom he includes, or rather intends, in the pronoun *we*, viewing all believers in every age as one great family. This ſhews that the firſt-fruits, of which James ſpeaks, intends the whole church of the firſt-born, and apply equally to them all; whence the other creatures of God, of whom they are the firſt-fruits, muſt refer to ſome other part of the creation. This is further evident from Rev. xiv. 4. where the phraſe is applied to the 144,000 ſealed ones, who have the Father's name written on their foreheads, and who appear to denote the elect, or true church in every age. "Theſe were redeemed from among men, being the firſt-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb." Beſides theſe diſtinguiſhed ſealed ones, we have an account in the vii chapter, of a great multitude, which no man could number, conſiſting of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Theſe are repreſented as brought out of great tribulation, and as having waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Theſe may probably intend the ſecond-fruits, or the full harveſt, of which the firſt-fruits are the pledge and earneſt; for it is evident that firſt-fruits have a reference to after-fruits, which muſt mean others and not the elect, they all being intended by the firſt-fruits.

The above explains and aſcertains what we are to underſtand by the firſt-fruit of the Spirit, in that remarkable paſſage, Rom. viii. 23. "And not only they, *but ourſelves alſo, which have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit*," &c. Here we have

the privilege of the whole church of the firſt-born, they enjoy the firſt-fruits of the Spirit. That there are ſecond-fruits of the Spirit, is plainly implied; for the firſt, as poſſeſſed by the ſaints, are the earneſt of them; but who ſhall enjoy theſe ſecond-fruits, it belongs to the word of God to determine.

Our Lord is alſo ſpoken of as firſt-fruits, with reference to thoſe in every age that die in him: "But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept," 1 Cor. xv. 20.—Does the reſurrection of our Lord, as the firſt-fruits to a ſtate of glory and immortality, ſecure the future reſurrection of his people to a ſimilar ſtate? Then, we are taught to believe, that what is and ſhall be done in and for the elect, as a kind of firſt-fruits of God's creatures, is a pledge and earneſt of what ſhall be done for theſe in due time. What right has man, we may aſk, to ſeparate the connection which God has eſtabliſhed? We may as well deny that there is any connection between Chriſt, as the firſt-fruits, and his people, as the firſt-harveſt, or a kind of firſt-fruits of the reſt of God's creatures. What God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder. Our Saviour is not the Lord of the firſt-fruits only, but alſo of the whole harveſt: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt," Mat. ix. 38. Paul defines the extent of this lordſhip: "For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," or of all men, Rom. xiv. 9. And Peter tells us, that he is Lord of all; "preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt, he is Lord of all," Acts x. 36. He himſelf alſo tells us, that the field on which the Son of Man ſoweth the good ſeed, is extenſive as the world, Mat. xiii. 37, 38. If the harveſt then belong to Chriſt, as well as the firſt-fruits; why ſhould we preſume to make ſo free with his property, as to make an irrecoverable preſent of it to the devil? for he is able to recover his own, and his Father has appointed him to inherit all things. Will he violate the appointment, or ſtop ſhort in his work? The reſtitution of all things reſts on as firm a baſis as the ſalvation of the elect, from which it is quite diſtinct. Enough has been ſaid on this point to ſatisfy the candid; but an angel from heaven cannot convince gainſayers.—Thoſe who deny the reſtoration muſt alſo prove,

That only a few of the captives of the mighty ſhall be taken away; and that the terrible one ſhall retain in his poſſeſſion the far greater part of his prey through all eternity, notwithſtanding the expreſs prediction or promiſe, That the captives of the mighty, the prey of the terrible ſhall be taken away, and be delivered, and that Jehovah ſhall contend with him for that purpoſe, and ſave Meſſiah's children, Iſa. xlix. 25. Are none captives of the mighty, and a prey to the terrible, but the elect? If there are, why ſhould we exclude them, without divine permiſſion? Our Lord deſcribes the children as partakers of fleſh and blood, which applies to all mankind, whom he regards as the offspring of deity, and as brethren in the great family of creation, Heb. ii. 14. The illegitimate children can claim brotherhood to the lawfully begotten, though they cannot inherit with them, unleſs legitimated.

To eſtabliſh the common doctrine, it muſt likewiſe be proved, That [redacted] is not a *Saviour to all men,* (though that general expreſſion includes the

no other ſenſe than as merely a temporal preſerver; and that the eſpecial manner in which he ſaves thoſe who believe cuts off all the reſt from any hope for ever. "We both labour, and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the *Saviour of all men*, eſpecially of thoſe that believe. Theſe things command and teach." 1ſt Tim. iii. 10. 11. The choice of ſome, and grant of ſpecial favours to them, does by no means amount, as is generally but unjuſtly thought, to a proof, that all others are entirely overlooked, and left to periſh without the moſt diſtant hope.

It remains with opponents to prove, That the promiſe made to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and ſo often repeated, and ſometimes confirmed even by an oath, ſhall never be fulfilled in the ſenſe that will naturally occur to every unprejudiced reader. "All the nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him;—by myſelf have I ſworn, that in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed;—in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed," Gen. xviii. 17. 18.—xxii. 17. 18.—xxvi. 4. "In thee and in thy ſeed ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed," Gen. xxviii. 14.—xii. 2. "Saying unto Abraham, and in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed," Acts, iii. 25. "Preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed," Gal. viii. "All the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before thee," Pſalm, xxii. 27. "All nations ſhall ſerve him—all nations ſhall call him bleſſed," Pſalm, lxxii. 11. 17. "He will deſtroy the face of the covering caſt over *all people*, and the vail that is ſpread over *all nations*. He will ſwallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off *all faces*," Iſa. xxv. 7. 8. It is promiſed. ver. 6. that the Lord of hoſts ſhall make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, of wines on the lees, well refined, of fat things full of marrow, and that this ſhall be in or by the mountain of his church; and ſhall all people taſte of that feaſt, or only a few among them? To evade the native force of theſe and the like plain declarations, we are told that they ſhall be all accompliſhed in the millennium, when it is thought all nations, kindreds, and families then exiſting ſhall be bleſſed in Chriſt; which cannot be proved from ſcriptures. But the Lord himſelf ſettles this point, and cuts off this evaſion for ever. "All nations whom thou haſt made ſhall come, and worſhip before thee, O Lord; and ſhall glorify thy name," Pſalm, lxxxvi. 9. Are there any nations whom God has not made? if there are not, none can be excepted. John ſaw an angel fly in the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting goſpel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, even all that God has made, or ſhall yet call into being, Rev. xiv. 6. And the great multitude, which no man can number, is ſaid to conſiſt of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, ch. vii. v. 9. The elect are ſaid to be redeemed from the earth, and from among men, but are never, that I can recollect, termed nations. "Thou art worthy, &c. for thou haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and [redacted] made us unto our God kings and prieſts; and we ſhall reign on the earth," Rev. v. 9. 10. Theſe are the ſaints; but, in the 13th verſe, the whole creation *join in one ſong of praiſe*. The leaves of the tree of life are ſaid to be

for the healing or ſalvation of the nations, and that in a viſion ſubſequent to the account of the day of judgment, and the glorification of the righteous. And we are told, that the nations of them which are ſaved, or reſtored, as the word alſo imports, ſhall walk in the light of the New Jeruſalem, the deſcent of which is exhibited in a different viſion from that of the final judgment, to which it is ſubſequent, and that the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it, Rev. xxi. 24. It is foretold, that all nations ſhall be gathered to the name of the Lord, to Jeruſalem, when it ſhall be called the throne of the Lord; and that all nations flow unto the mountain of the Lord's houſe, Jer. iii. 17. Iſa. ii. 2. Our bleſſed Lord is alſo called "The Deſire of all nations;" and ſhall that expreſſive title be never realized? Hag. ii. 7. ſhall he never be deſired by them?

Are all theſe glorious things, and many more to the ſame purpoſe in the ſacred volume, reconcilable to the common doctrine? Are not many nations now extinct, that never heard of Chriſt's name, and conſequently could not be bleſſed in him? But as God is the common Maker of them all, he has pledged his word that they ſhall come, and worſhip before him, and glorify his name, Pſal. lxxxvi. 9. and he is infinitely worthy of credit. The Jewiſh church expreſſed her faith in prayer, that Meſſiah would inherit all nations: "Ariſe, O God, judge the earth; for thou ſhalt inherit all nations," Pſal. lxxxii. 8. Can it be in hell that he will inherit the greater part of them, which muſt be the caſe, if he inherit them at all, if all the nations that forget him are to continue there throughout boundleſs duration? "The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" which, as nations, they have in general, or perhaps, without exception, done hitherto, Pſal. ix. 17.—As for the kindreds and families of the earth, inſtead of having been all bleſſed in Meſſiah, have not millions of them gone off the ſtage of life, that received no ſaving grace from him, leading to call him bleſſed in return? The oath of God cannot however be broken, nor will the unbelief of men make it void. After ſurveying ſo many clear teſtimonies of ſcripture, I cannot help thinking it a piece of daring impiety, to preſume to contradict our Maker in them all, and make free to explain them in ſuch a way, as to diveſt them entirely of their plain and obvious meaning. Even his oath, ſacred as it ought to be held, does not eſcape. Alas, how little honour do his profeſſed children in general to his divine character! Can we know what the Lord means, in his promiſes and oath, better than himſelf, that we ſhould dare tell him to his face, that he only intends a very few, by the univerſal term *all*, perhaps not at the rate of one in ſo many thouſands, as if he did not know the meaning of the language which he uſes, or meant to couch his real meaning under the ſubterfuge, or ſecret reſerve of an heathen oracle? If ever we expect a perſon to ſpeak plainly, and without a figure, it will ſurely be when he is on oath; but the oath of Jehovah is not allowed to mean what it plainly expreſſes. Let us treat our earthly prince in a ſimilar manner, and ſee if it will paſs with impunity. Is there any thing in our Creator's oath that makes ſuch liberty neceſſary? Any thing in its full import that he cannot accomplish or is unworthy of him to perform, that ſuch pains ſhould be employed to [illegible] reſtrict, and explain *away his* promiſes and oath?

Can it be unworthy of God, the father of all, or unbecoming his paternal character, to relieve his guilty miſerable creatures at length, however obſtinate and rebellious, from guilt and miſery, and to reſtore them to holineſs and happineſs? Does this exceed his power, or the extent of his mercy, benevolence, and love, that it ſhould ſeem to many ſo incredible? If there will be a reſtitution of all things, in the proper ſenſe of that phraſe, then the common doctrine is one of the groſſeſt ſlanders on the Divine character that hell could invent and ſupport. Through the force of education, ſyſtem, and prejudice, the mind may remain callous to ſuch conſiderations; for the united influence of theſe blinds the eyes even of the wiſe: But if their weight and evidence is reſiſted after the attention is directed to them, it cannot be with innocence. The Lord grant us underſtanding in all things, and a diſpoſition to receive truth, from whatever quarter it comes! The farther proſecution of theſe things I muſt reſerve to another opportunity. Wiſhing you much ſucceſs in every ſcriptural effort to promote the cauſe of Chriſt, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours cordially, &c.

LEETER III.

There was much murmuring among the people concerning him. For ſome ſaid, he is a good man; others ſaid, nay, but he deceiveth the people, John vii. 4.—*Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he ſhould live,* Acts xxii. 22.—*I will have mercy and not ſacrifice—ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs,* Math. xii. 7.

Dear Sir,

TRUTH is a gem that cannot be ſought with too much care, nor too highly prized when found. Though every divine truth does not occupy the ſame place in the fabric of mercy, yet he that deſpiſes one, knowing it to be ſuch, is guilty of deſpiſing the whole. We may be aſhamed of Chriſt in his truth, as well as in his perſon; and if we are, he has warned us of the conſequence. To ſuppoſe that God has revealed ſome doctrines that have little or no influence on practical holineſs, and may therefore be ſuppreſſed, without the leaſt detriment to the cauſe of Chriſtianity, would be to impeach the Divine wiſdom. If the doctrine of the Reſtoration be admitted to be ſcriptural, and that which Peter intends by the reſtitution of all things, its vaſt importance, and broad baſis, in the ſcheme of revealed religion, may be inferred from God's having ſpoken it by the mouth of his holy prophets ſince the world began.—In my laſt, I have pointed out ſome things, which, in my opinion, muſt be done before the doctrine of the Reſtoration can be overturned. To ſay the leaſt of them, they certainly deſerve a cool examination; and the Chriſtian who acts wiſely, will not [illegible] reject or condemn the doctrine which appears to be ſo ſupported, leſt he [illegible] be found to reſiſt or condemn the Holy Spirit ſpeaking in his word. I beg leave to direct your attention, and that of the reader, to ſome other

things which appear to me conſonant to the word of God, yet quite irreconcilable to the common doctrine of the eternal prevalance of ſin and miſery over the great bulk of mankind.

We are taught, by reſpectable authority, to believe, that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever; and this appears agreeable both to reaſon and Scripture. This is generally explained to intend the great and chief end of his creation, preſervation, and redemption. The proof of this is ſeldom called in queſtion. Can the Moſt High be diſappointed, in whole or in part, in his chief or ſole end, in giving exiſtence to his creatures? Whatever obſtacles may intervene to the accompliſhment of this great end, to ſuppoſe or aſſert that it ſhall never be attained, would be to tax the Divine wiſdom as deficient in planing, or the Divine power in executing, or the Divine will as intending, at one time, what was relinquiſhed at another. Is it conſiſtent with the notion of an all-perfect being, to fail in all, or in any of theſe reſpects? If he intended his own glory, and their happineſs, in giving being to the race of man, will he recede from his purpoſe, or accompliſh it only in part? But ſay that this was his end with reſpect to the elect only, that he never intended any elſe ſhould glorify and enjoy him, but the reverſe, and that all the revenue which he ever meant to reap from the reſt, is the glory of his juſtice. If this be realy the caſe, the wicked anſwer the end of their creation as effectually, when they go on in ſin, tranſgreſs God's laws, and work out their own damnation, as the righteous when they ſerve and enjoy him. But to ſuppoſe this is blaſphemous, though a neceſſary conſequence of the common doctrine. If it was chiefly for the glory of his juſtice God ordained the exiſtence of all, except the elect, then he will be eternally diſappointed, while injured juſtice always ſeeks ſatisfaction, by demanding the eternal miſery of the wicked; for, could they render that ſatisfaction, within any given period, they could demand their releaſe on the footing of juſtice itſelf. God's end in giving being is uniform and worthy of himſelf, as the Father of all; and that end ſhall be finally anſwered, let men and devils oppoſe it as they will; for his purpoſe that ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure. We may, therefore, indulge the pleaſing hope, that man ſhall yet attain his chief end, in glorifying and enjoying that God who has given him exiſtence, and ſent his Son from heaven to redeem, ſeek, and ſave him.

Let thoſe who deny the Reſtoration prove, that the predictions which reſpect the happy reſtoration of Sodom, and other cities and nations, which have been deſtroyed for their ſins, however explicit, ſhall never be verified in the ſenſe an unprejudiced reader would expect, and the only ſenſe in which ſome of them can be fulfilled. "When I ſhall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midſt of them. When thy ſiſters, Sodom and her daughters, ſhall return to their former eſtate, and Samaria and her daughters ſhall return to their former eſtate, then thou and thy daughters ſhall return to your former eſtate," Ezek. xvi. 53. 55. plainly intimating, that the people who had been deſtroyed in Sodom and the neighbour-

ing cities, and the idolatrous Jews of the ten tribes, denoted by Samaria, would be delivered before the wicked of the tribe of Judah. We see in the 54th verse the nature of the change to be wrought upon them; "That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done." Not one of the people of Sodom and her three daughter cities escaped in the general overthrow, for Lot was none of them. Their captivity then must respect their state in the world of spirits, particularly after the day of judgment, when it shall be more tolerable for them than for the wicked Jews. The bringing again the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and their return to their former estate, which the Lord promises shall take place, can be accounted for upon no other system but that of the Restoration. Our Lord seems to have this prophesy in his eye, Math. xi. 24.—Let them also prove,

That Christ did not die for the sins of the *whole world*, and taste death for *every man*, but only that comparatively small number, the elect. "He is the propitiation for *our sins*; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*," 1 John ii. 2. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the sufferings of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for *every man*," Heb. ii. 9. Peter asserts that Christ bought some that denied him, and brought on themselves swift destruction; and Paul supposes a brother may be destroyed for whom Christ died, 2 Pet. ii. 1. Rom. xiv. 15. This is a plain proof that Christ died for more than his elect, none of whom can be supposed to perish, even for some who were subjected to the second death. The laying down his life for them was a voluntary act, and we are told that he wills the salvation of all men; and will his power never be exerted to recover what he has bought, and wills to be recovered? Purchase gives the right of property; but that the Lord should abandon so much of his property to all eternity, to his greatest enemy, agrees neither with his character nor with his word. Does not the whole world, as distinguished from the elect, include all mankind: John assures us, that, besides the sins of the church of the first born, our Lord is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, which must intend intelligent beings, as none else can sin. But rather than give up an iota of their system, many will pervert the plainest texts of Scripture; and if they persist, in the face of evidence, it will be to their own destruction.—It must be proved,

That our Lord's birth shall never prove the subject of good tidings of great joy to *all people*, whatever the angels might have said or sung to the contrary; that many a people, and indeed all people, a few select individuals excepted, shall know him only by the terrors of his justice, and the punishment of everlasting destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power. So says the received creeds; and if true, Messiah's birth shall never be the subject of good tidings of great joy to all people. "And the angel said unto them, fear not; for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," Luke ii. 10, 11. With the angel agreed the multitude of *the heavenly hosts*, who connected with the birth of Christ peace on earth, and

good will to men, even to all people, as the angel expreſſes it, or to all mankind. Surely that hoſt did not exceed their commiſſion; and is not their declaration as worthy of credit as that of any modern church-men, or their abettors:—Is there any thing in the word, character, or conduct of the Moſt High towards his creatures, that can juſtify our aſſerting, as a matter of faith not to be called in queſtion, that he is the only wiſe and worthy father in the univerſe, who ſhall puniſh his children with vindictive, and not corrective ſtripes, or without the leaſt regard to their good; and that his government is probably the only one that ever did, or ſhall exiſt, to the honour and ſtability of which endleſs and unremitted puniſhment is neceſſary? Does not the very idea caſt a moſt unmerited reflection on the Divine character, and degrade it below that of fallible man, who can make his adminiſtration reſpected even by limited puniſhments, the only puniſhments indeed in his power? But many argue the neceſſity of endleſs miſery, from conſiderations drawn from the tranſcendant majeſty of God, and the infinite dignity of his government; but if the word of God is allowed to determine the point, they either know not in what theſe conſiſt, or quite miſplace them. All this is pleaded by many zealots for the common doctrine, ſome of whom indulge their vein of railery on the doctrine of limited puniſhment, alleging that there is no need of holineſs, if that holds true, that men may at pleaſure indulge in every ſin. But thoſe who can talk at that rate are no Chriſtians; nay, they are Athieſts at bottom, let them profeſs what they will; for that God whoſe wrath is not worth dreading, if it be not eternal, is an idol of their own framing, and not the Creator of heaven and earth. A few ſeconds of his earthquake, as of late, will make theſe men of might to tremble, notwithſtanding all their ſneers at the terrors of almighty wrath, that may be protracted, perhaps, for a thouſand ages. Theſe very men would deprecate the puniſhment of one hour in the pillory, and yet they can laugh at the miſery God has threatened to inflict, unleſs he perpetuate it without end. This is repreſenting their Maker as ten thouſand times leſs worthy of dread than a fellow mortal; and yet ſuch men have the preſumption or the wickedneſs to think themſelves good Chriſtians, and that they are doing God excellent ſervice by ſuch profanity, or daring impiety. If nought but the fear of hell will make ſome men dread their Maker, they and their religion are yet of their father the devil; and if that mercy they deſpiſe prevent not, will be doomed, with all their religion, to dwell with him in utter darkneſs. As ſoon ſhall all the demons of darkneſs aſcend to heaven as ſuch characters, with ſuch views and ſentiments; for the devils believe and tremble. The Lord loves not the fear or ſervice of ſlaves. We read, "and they ſhall fear and tremble for all the goodneſs that I procure"—"And ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs in the latter days," Jer. xxxiii. 9. Hoſ. iii. 5. David ſays, "But there is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared," Pſalm cxxx. 4. How very different his ſentiments from our modern wiſe men of Gotham, who preach an oppoſite doctrine, that the more forgiveneſs and mercy there is with God, the more he is to be deſpiſed. They that know his name or character, which to know is eternal life, will put their truſt in him, and be more concerned to be delivered from all their iniquities than from hell itſelf. But many, by their mode of ſpeaking, foam out their own ſhame, an

ſhew whoſe they are, and whom they ſerve Jude, ver. 13. That doctrine, be it what it will in itſelf, ſerves a noble purpoſe, which diſcovers the groſs ignorance, and hidden impiety and Athieſm of men's hearts. Let them not be mockers, leſt their bands be made ſtrong; for if they are wiſe, they ſhall be wiſe for themſelves; but if they ſcorn, they alone ſhall bear it, Iſa. xxviii. 22. Prov. ix. 12.

Thoſe who maintain, that God is the only father, worthy of the name, who ever did, or ever ſhall, puniſh his rebellious children, and that to all eternity, and even children that never rebelled, millions of unoffending infants, without the leaſt eye to their good, would do well to conſider his own words: "If I be a father, where is my honour;" Mal. i. 6. "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice," Matt. ix. 13. This is addreſſed to Scribes and Phariſees to this day. Let us all be cautious how we aſcribe to God what would kindle our reſentment, if applied to ourſelves, leſt he one day convince us, to our confuſion, that he is not the father we have ſo often repreſented him to be. This conſideration weighs not a little with me againſt the common doctrine, which ſadly ſullies God's paternal character, in ſpite of all the ſpecious reaſoning employed to defend it.—The patrons of the common ſyſtem muſt alſo prove,

That the Son of God was manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the devil *only in part*, that ſyſtem maintaining that the great maſs of them ſhall continue and increaſe for ever; and alſo prove that millions of plants ſhall be ſpared, contrary to Chriſt's word, which his heavenly Father never planted, and remain firmly rooted for ever. "For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the *works of the devil*," 1 John iii. 8. Becauſe it is not ſaid all the works of the devil, advantage is taken of the expreſſion, and the accompliſhment of it confined to the elect. But though the term all had been uſed, thoſe who take this advantage could eaſily get over it, as they do in many plain ſcriptures. The wicked one has many works beſides thoſe which he effects in the elect; yet are they all neceſſarily included in the expreſſion. Would the Holy Spirit ſo expreſs himſelf, that his propoſition cannot be true unleſs you expound it by a quibble? Though his works ſhall all be deſtroyed in the elect; yet that does not juſtify us in confining the purpoſe of our Lord's manifeſtation to them, while ſcriptures lead us to carry it much farther.—"Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted ſhall be rooted up," Matt. xv. 13. Here the language is full and expreſſive. The only plant in the univerſe which God has not planted is ſin, and miſery is its fruit, which muſt periſh when the plant itſelf is rooted up. The language of our Lord admits not of a ſingle exception; and conſequently we have no right to make any. But the common doctrine comes in with her exceptions, and theſe not few; for ſhe tells us that unknown millions of plants ſhall exiſt deeply rooted, and bear the bitter fruit of deathleſs miſery to all eternity. She tells us alſo, that the works of the devil, ſo far from being deſtroyed, ſhall endure for evermore, thoſe deſtroyed in the elect only excepted. But Chriſt works not by halves, and give him time to compliſh his work in his own way. The language of John plainly admits, if *it not neceſſarily imply*, the deſtruction of the whole. Here there is a pal-

pable contradiction; but ſhall we aſcribe it to the volume of truth, as not according with itſelf, or to the ſyſtems of men?—It muſt be likewiſe proved,

That though the creating, preſerving, and redeeming root of mankind, in whom they all live, move, and have their being, be holy; yet unknown millions of the branches ſhall remain polluted to all eternity, and as ſuch becom the endleſs unwaſted prey of hell-fire. "For if the firſt fruit be holy, the lump is alſo holy: and if the root is holy, ſo are the branches," Rom. xi. 16. The force of this argument is not in the leaſt diminiſhed, by its primary application to the Jews. The firſt fruit and the root, in the following inſtance, reſpects the patriarch Abraham; and the lump and the branches, the great body of the Jewiſh nation, even the branches that were broken off becauſe of unbelief. We are here taught, that the holineſs of the firſt-fruit, and of the root, will ſecure the holineſs of the maſs and of the branches in due time Our Lord introduces Abraham as calling Dives, even in the ſtate of miſery, *Son*; whence he is taught and encouraged to call the patriarch in return, *Father Abraham*. We ſee what uſe our Lord made of this relation, and what privilege he attached to it: "And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the Sabbath-day," Luke xiii. 16. There is a Sabbath or glorious reſt, during which the Lord Jeſus ſhall ſet thoſe ſons and daughters of Abraham at liberty, who remain till then the captives of ſin, Satan, and death; for he will ſubdue them all to himſelf, and looſe the priſoners. Our bleſſed Lord has a reaſon for putting ſuch language in the mouth of Abraham and of Dives. However long Satan may bind many of Abraham's ſons and daughters, yet the Lord Jeſus can looſe them; for he is ſaid to looſe the priſoners without excepting any. The common doctrine leaves all the ſons and daughters of Abraham, that die in unbelief, eternally bound, and in the cuſtody of Satan; but our Lord in effect ſays, Ought they not to be looſed, being the children of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, theſe many ages, from this bondage, on the grand jubilee or feſtival of the univerſe. We thus ſee the connection between Abraham and Chriſt, that to be related to the former as a father, ſecures the bleſſing of the latter as a Saviour, which bleſſing is come upon us Gentiles. Thus it was promiſed, that he ſhould be a father of many nations, even all the nations that were to be bleſſed in him, and in Meſſiah his ſeed.—Thus he is become the father or the root of the Gentiles alſo, whoſe holineſs is thereby ſecured.—And can it be denied that Chriſt is the creating and preſerving root of all men? Did he not alſo give his life a ranſom for all, and taſte death for every man? whence he is become their redeeming root. Seeing then he, as the root, is holy, the branches ſhall in due time be made holy alſo. As he and the elect are holy, and both called firſt-fruits, the lump or maſs is or ſhall be holy alſo, even the ſecond-fruits, or the whole harveſt. How then ſhall the maſs and the branches remain polluted for ever, contrary to the apoſtle's plain argument?—It muſt alſo be proved,

That the *whole creation*, as diſtinguiſhed from the ſons of God, or the church of the firſt-born, ſhall never be delivered from vanity and the bondage of corruption, into any, *even the leaſt ſhare* in the glorious liberty of God's children;

and that Chriſt will never reconcile *all things* to the Father, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven, whatever the Scriptures may ſay on the ſubject. "The creature itſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God," Rom. viii. 21. or the creation, even the whole creation, as in the next verſe, theſe children excepted. The apoſtle places the period of this deliverance after the ſaints are glorified together with Chriſt; ver. 17. when his glory ſhall be revealed in them, ver. 18. after the manifeſtation of the ſons of God; and they are made ſharers of their glorious liberty, ver. 19, 21. and ſubſequent to the reſurrection of the body, ver. 23. A little attention to theſe circumſtances will ſhew that the ſenſe commonly attached to the reſtitution of all things, the ſame thing that Paul has here in his eye, is inadmiſſible, and that the æra of that reſtitution muſt be placed after the period when Chriſt ſhall appear with his ſaints in his glory, or when they ſhall begin to reign with him for ever and ever, or for the age of ages. The glorious liberty which God's children ſhall then enjoy, muſt include complete deliverance from ſin and miſery, and the full poſſeſſion of holineſs and happineſs, of which the inferior creatures, to which ſome would reſtrict the deliverance, are incapable.

As the language of the Holy Spirit on the preceding point is plain, ſo is it alſo with regard to the extent of reconciliation. "For it pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile *all things* unto himſelf; by him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. i. 19, 20. It is well known, that to *reconcile* ſignifies to reſtore to favour, or to make thoſe friends who before were at variance. To this three things are neceſſary, that the injury or wrong done the party offended be repaired,—that interceſſion be made for the offender, and that he be brought to love the party offended, and to a diſpoſition to offend no more. As among men, the party offending is generally worſt to reconcile, ſo is it alſo in the caſe before us; for God is now in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, having previouſly ſhewed his love by ſending him to make propitiation, not for the ſins of the elect only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole world, as the Scriptures plainly aſſert. Our Lord was and is fully qualified to accompliſh reconciliation in its full extent. Hath it pleaſed the Father to reconcile *all things* unto himſelf, whether things in earth or in heaven, or from enemies to make them friends? and how ſay many that the far greater part of them ſhall remain enemies, or at variance with God, and he with them as long as he exiſts? Ye who profeſs to fear giving God the lie, by believing the reſtoration, becauſe a few equivocal phraſes in Scripture ſtand in the way of it, are you not afraid to contradict him in this, and many other plain paſſages of his word? If you offend in theſe, by oppoſing and cavilling at their obvious meaning, what will your zeal, with regard to other texts, avail?—Beſides, it muſt alſo be proved,

That the Father will never gather together in one, *all things in Chriſt*, or *re-head* all things in him, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; and that theſe all things can intend no more than the elect, who are ſo few, or ſo *I a remnant, that,* according to ſome of the advocates of the common doc-

tune, they are not above one in ten thouſand. "Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure which he hath purpoſed in himſelf; that in the diſpenſation of the *fulneſs of times* he might gather together in one *all things* in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him," Eph. i. 9, 10. Sin has disjointed, diſperſed, and ſcattered the whole creation, the angels that retain their firſt eſtate excepted. But they are to be gathered together in Chriſt, as defeated ſoldiers are rallied under their general, or the ſcattered dry bones in the valley of viſion, into a ſtate of union with the head, Ezek. xxxvii. Paul explains, in the above chapter, Eph. i. 22. the putting *all things* under Chriſt's feet by his being made head over them: "And hath put *all things* under his feet, and gave him to be the head over *all things* to the church." The nature and extent of this headſhip is generally overlooked, or groſsly miſunderſtood. Elſewhere he ſays, "But I would have you know that the head of *every man* is Chriſt; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Chriſt is God," 1 Cor. xi. 3. What right have the patrons of the common doctrine to limit this, in their uſual bold, dogmatic way, to the elect; or to ſay that his headſhip over the reſt of mankind is only in order to puniſh and deſtroy them? Did he not taſte death for *every man*, and die, and revive, and riſe again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living, or of all mankind? Has the man or huſband no headship over the woman, or his wife? We may as well deny this union, and that betwixt the Father and the Son, or maintain that the object of both is the hurt or deſtruction, and not the good of thoſe concerned, as to deny that there is any union between Chriſt and *every man*, or that it has any reſpect to their happineſs. Paul would have the church to know that Meſſiah is not only her head, but alſo the head of all mankind; yea, of all things, which the Father has given into his hand, and in his grant ſubjected to him, that he may in due time ſubdue them all to himſelf, and deliver them up in that ſtate to his Father. For aſſerting this, we have the beſt authority; for in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, which is diſtinguiſhed from the preſent diſpenſation of the goſpel, God will gather together in one *all things* in Chriſt. How then ſhall countleſs millions of the moſt noble creatures lie ſcattered eternally in the burning lake, like the dry bones over the valley of viſion? Though ſyſtems aſſert this, yet God is worthy to be believed in oppoſition to theſe; for on this point, they and his word cannot be true.—It muſt be proved,

That though God commands us to love our enemies, without exception, and as a proof of our love, cordially to forgive them, to ſeek and pray for their happineſs, and overcome their evil with good, after his own example, exhorting us to be followers, or imitators of him in theſe reſpects, as dear children; yet he himſelf will never love millions of his enemies, or employ his goodneſs to overcome their evil, and never ſeek, in any inſtance, their good, but retain and puniſh their ſins with inexorable wrath, duration without end. Would he have his frail, ſinful creature man to exerciſe a more ſublime meaſure of goodneſs than he himſelf will ever exerciſe, if the common doctrine be true, and that upon pain of never receiving forgiveneſs from himſelf? Is it not ſaid, with a view to the exerciſe of this very grace, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father

who is in heaven is perfect," Mat. v. 48. He is said, ver. 45. to make his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and to send rain on the just and on the unjust. He does this, in the most important sense, in the conversion of every sinner; when the sun of righteousness rises on his benighted mind, with healing in his wings or rays, and the rain of divine influences is shed on his polluted heart. Our Father in heaven will thus make his sun yet to shine on all the evil, and send his rain on all the unjust; if the efficacy of the antitype, the Sun of righteousness, shall yet be as extensively felt as the efficacy of the type, the natural sun, from the heat of which, in its wide circuit, there is nothing hid, Psa. xlix. 6. Every Christian knows from experience, that the more his heart is under the influence of the Holy Spirit in prayer, the more will he feel himself disposed to love all men, and to pray for their happiness here and hereafter. The Spirit knows the deep things of God, and intercedes in the saints, according to the will of God. But if it is the will and unalterable purpose of God to give grace to none but the elect, would the Spirit influence Christians to ask grace for all men to their salvation, contrary to the mind and will of the God of salvation? He would teach them to pray for none but the elect. Why are all the elect a royal nation of priests, to offer up supplications for others, if these are never to be answered? for this honour have all the saints. Hence the prayer of Paul for the church, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward *all men*, even as we do toward you," 1 Thes. iii. 12. The love of the Apostle and his brethren, toward those to whom he wrote, was sincere, fervent, and comprehensive, including nothing less than their salvation; and he prays they may abound in a similar love toward *all men*. Is not this a conclusive argument in favour of the final happiness of all men; as the Apostle would not pray for what he knew was contrary to the divine purpose?—Those who deny the above view of the matter must also prove, *

That God shall contend for ever, in their sense of that phrase, as applied to future punishment, and be always wroth, though the spirit should fail before him, and the souls that he has made; and also prove that he does not so delight in mercy as to prevent his retaining his anger for ever, although he hath said, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit would fail before me, and the souls which I have made," Isa. lvii. 16. The very text here condemns the common expedient of getting rid of the plainest truths, by confining the sense to the elect. The language is general, and equally includes all men. Did God make any souls but those of the elect? Are the souls of others made of such materials, that though he should contend without end, and be always wroth, their spirits would not fail before him? Let us not forget, that, as Creator, he is the father of the spirits of all flesh, and let us not presume to rob him of the glory due to that name.—"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast *all their sins* into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast *sworn unto our fathers from* the days of old," Mic. vii. 18, 19, 20. I cannot

tarry to remark on this paſſage—What does the remnant of God's heritage import? The elect are the firſt fruits of the heritage; a remnant is evidently that which remains, after ſomething is taken out of it, be that little or much. It is evident, from the truth and mercy promiſed and ſworn to the patriarchs, that the Gentiles are included, even all nations, kindreds, and families of the earth. The common doctrine ſaith, that God will retain his anger for ever, though his own word aſſerts the reverſe; and that not with regard to the elect only, but in reſpect of all mankind. That God ſhould diſcontinue, after a certain period, what he delights in, and continue what he accounts a ſtrange work, and that ſo long as he exiſts, would need the moſt expreſs declaration to entitle it to any credit. The declarations are on the other ſide, and all that are oppoſed to them either admit of two ſenſes, owing to the ambiguity of the tranſlation, or may be explained in perfect conſiſtency with them.

I feel not a little ſurpriſed at myſelf, that the obvious meaning of the plaineſt paſſages of ſcripture ſhould have ſo long eſcaped me; but this ſhould teach to make allowance for others. It is ſurpriſing any ſhould think, that Chriſt's inheriting all nations, is conſiſtent with the turning of all the nations that forget God into hell, and keeping them there, in cloſe cuſtody, and dreadful torments, as long as he exiſts! And it is alſo not a little ſtrange, that ſuch a plain prediction ſhould be confined in its accompliſhment to the nations that ſhall exiſt in one period, as if all the nations that lived in preceding ages had no concern in the promiſe, with very few exceptions! How ſhall we reconcile this to that ſolemn declaration, "All nations whom thou haſt made ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and ſhall glorify thy name," Pſal. lxxxvi. 9. Here is a key to many other paſſages of ſcripture. With great propriety it is added, "for thou art great, and doeſt wondrous things: thou art God alone." Similar is the language which John heard from the mouths of thoſe who ſhall ſtand upon the ſea of glaſs, having the harps of God, "Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for *all nations* ſhall come and worſhip before thee," Rev. xv. 4. The nations whom the Lord ſhall inherit will he cauſe to come and worſhip before him, even in ſpirit and in truth, and they who thus worſhip are and ſhall be bleſſed. The following prayer in Doctor Horne's comment on Pſal. lxxxii. 8. is worthy of notice: "Ariſe, O Lord Jeſus, from thy throne where thou ſitteſt, at the right hand of thy Father; *judge the earth*, corrupted and overwhelmed with iniquity; do away ſin, and put an end *for ever* to the power of Satan; *inherit all nations*, redeemed from death, and ranſomed from the grave." The good Biſhop here prays, that an end may be put for ever to Satan's power, which is not conſiſtent with his eternal reign over thouſands of ſubjects, for one that Meſſiah ſhall poſſeſs. The common doctrine, by repreſenting God as giving them up to the tormenting power of the devil throughout all eternity, makes ſuch a prayer a ſin, and a rebelling againſt the Divine purpoſe and counſel. The Biſhop alſo makes our Lord's inheriting *all nations* to be ſubſequent to their being redeemed from death, and ranſomed from the grave, the very thing for which the Univerſaliſts contend, as it cannot take place in any other period.

When I began theſe letters, I intended to be very conciſe; but the objections often urged ſhew the neceſſity of arguing a little even upon the plaineſt texts of ſcripture, in order to counteract the force of prejudice and education, which blind the mind to the moſt obvious truths. The very diſciples were dull of underſtanding, and ſlow of heart to believe, our Lord himſelf being judge; and I fear that many diſciples are too much ſo ſtill. May the Lord grant us underſtanding in all things, that the knowledge of his word may be eaſy to us.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours to command in the truth, &c.

LETTER IV.

But we deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt; for as concerning this ſect, we know that every where it is ſpoken againſt. Acts xxviii. 22.

This I confeſs, that after the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets. Acts xxiv. 14.

Angels bring not railing accuſation; but theſe ſpeak evil of the things that they underſtand not.—Michael, when contending with the devil, durſt not bring againſt him railing accuſation, but ſaid, The Lord rebuke thee. 2 Pet. ii. 11, 12. Jude ver. 9.

Dear Sir,

WE learn from Paul, that Chriſtianity in his time was called a hereſy, which, in the eyes of ſome might attach reproach. But the Greek term αἵρεσις (*heréſis*) admits of a good as well as a bad ſenſe, in its original acceptation, and is ſometimes rendered ſect, which has not the ſame odious ſound. It denotes a ſelection or choice; and becauſe the firſt Chriſtians would not receive common opinions any farther than they thought they agreed with the word of God, it was applied to them by the Jews in the worſt ſenſe; for men are apt to condemn as unſcriptural and pernicious whatever does not accord with their own creed. Thus the charge of hereſy has been often given and retorted with equal effect. Though the four principal ſects among the Jews were diſtinguiſhed by the ſingularity of their opinions and practices, yet they continued united in communion with each other, and with their whole nation. This ſhould ſurely teach profeſſed Chriſtians to be leſs hoſtile to each other, whatever be their difference of ſentiment; ſeeing no man has a right, in matters of faith, to dictate to his brother. Have they not all one Father? Sufficient claims muſt therefore ſtill remain for the interchange of kind offices, and the exerciſe of brotherly love, of which the bulk of profeſſors ſeem to have no idea, who appear to have little more of Chriſtianity than the name. Bleſſed is he who ſhall not be offended in Chriſt.

It appears that the way which they called hereſy, included the belief of all things which are written in the law and the prophets; and the ſame thing is accounted by many hereſy ſtill, unleſs your faith be regulated by their creed. When it is ſaid, that Chriſtianity was a ſect or hereſy every where ſpoken againſt, this ſhews that it was ſpoken of every where. To meet with general oppoſition is no mark of error or of falſe religion, but of the true. Since men exiſted on the earth, the majority has never been on the ſide of truth. Councils and ſynods have indeed put it to the vote, and thus decided what the church was to believe and practice.

Let us apply our Lord's rule to the doctrine of the Reſtoration, and that which ſtands oppoſed to it, from the profeſſors of which no quarter can be had. By their fruits ye ſhall know them; for what produces figs and grapes, may be proved to be neither thorn nor thiſtle. Let any man judge which of the two doctrines is moſt likely to be from above, that which tends to inſpire reverence and love to God, and truſt and confidence in him, as alſo love and charity to fellow men; or that which is calculated to beget ſervile fear, diſtruſt, jealouſy, and deſpair, with reſpect to God, and ſelf-conſequence and an uncharitable ſpirit in regard of men. The univerſal doctrine teaches that God loves all men, and ſeeks their ultimate happineſs in all his dealings with them, which he will at length perfectly accomplish. But the common doctrine maintains, that he loves only a very few, ſo as to bring them to enjoy happineſs, not perhaps above one in ten thouſand, if we believe ſome reverend doctors; and that all the reſt ſhall be viſited with the moſt dreadful effects of his inexhorable hatred and incenſed indignation ſo long as he exiſts.

This is poor conſolation to an alarmed ſoul, that feels itſelf on the brink of perdition. It would not be eaſy to perſuade a man to venture his money where he had ten thouſand blanks for one prize; yet is it much more difficult to perſuade him to venture his ſoul, when a guilty conſcience paints his demerit, and Satan is at his right hand to reſiſt him. Does the word of God give ſuch a contracted view of his mercy?

Let common ſenſe ſay, which of theſe doctrines agrees beſt with the character or attributes of that adorable being, who is twice ſaid by John to be love itſelf, and alſo ſaid to be good to all, and full of compaſſion; while it is expreſsly aſſerted, that his tender mercies are over all his works. There is nothing ſo bad but men will believe it of their Maker, reputing him a hard maſter, &c. but there is nothing ſo flattering but their vanity will lead them to believe it of themſelves. Hence the very worſt of men feel diſpoſed to reprobate the doctrine of the reſtoration, becauſe they flatter themſelves they ſhall never have occaſion for it. They are apt to conclude, one way or other, that they ſhall be ſaved from the wrath to come; and ſo deſtitute are they of any thing like true philanthropy, that they give themſelves little concern what ſhall become of the reſt of their ſpecies. This is the character of all thoſe who have little of religion but the form; who imbibe the phariſaical ſpirit; and take theſe from among profeſſors, and the Lord knows how few will be left behind. Did the doctrine of the reſtoration really deſtroy that diſcrimination of moral character among men, which *the word* of God every where aſcertains, it ought to be.

held in univerſal abhorrence. But ſo far is this from being the caſe, all that know it, and feel its power on their own hearts, muſt own that it is, above all others, friendly to that holineſs which the word and example of Chriſt enforce. It ſhews how the church of the ſecond-born are to be made holy as well as happy, to the glory of Jeſus, and of the work of his ſpirit, and to the honour of divine truth, and the additional honour and happineſs of the righteous. It reconciles the character of God as a father to the ſeverity of future puniſhment, and ſhews how the ſtripes inflicted ſhall bear proportion to the guilt contracted.

The works of God will always correſpond to his revealed character, and to what he has ſaid of himſelf; a rule of judging of theſe works too little attended to; for many will believe things of God abhorrent of his revealed character, and from the plaineſt things which he has ſaid of himſelf. Our Lord tells us, that to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he has ſent, is eternal life; John xvii. 3. which plainly ſhews of what conſequence it is in religion to attain proper views of the Divine character; for an error here will be like the dead fly in the box of ointment. If we aſcribe to him what he diſavows, or what runs counter to any of the works he has declared he will perform, we ſo far change the glory of the true God into an image of our own framing.

We are told that God is great in mercy—that he is holy or merciful in all his works; which cannot be the caſe, if the work of puniſhment has not the moſt diſtant view to the good of the offender; and that he delights in mercy, or in its exerciſe, and will have mercy and not ſacrifice, while judgment is his ſtrange work, to which he is averſe, and with which he neither is nor will be familiar; and that he afflicts none willingly, whether elect or non-elect; for "though he cauſe grief, yet will be have compaſſion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies." All this is perfectly agreeable to his character, whoſe nature is love, and will be exemplified in every meaſure of his adminiſtration, and finally diſplayed as the reſult of the whole, though men and devils ſhould exert every nerve to rob him of that glory. Is it neceſſary for a reader of the ſcriptures to quote their authority for the above? "The Lord is gracious, and full of compaſſion; ſlow to anger, and of great mercy," or, as on the margin, "great in mercy," Pſal. cxlv. 8. If God be full of compaſſion, whatever proceeds from him muſt have mercy for its principle and end; for a fountain cannot ſend out water that it does not contain. The common doctrine contradicts this part of God's character; for it repreſents him as having a fulneſs of vindictive wrath, which ſhall be poured out to all eternity into the veſſels of wrath; as well as a fulneſs of love for the ſaints. If God be full of compaſſion, how ſhall we find room in him for a ſhoreleſs ocean of relentleſs wrath? Doth this fountain ſend forth ſweet waters and bitter? Mercy is the glory of his nature, and he is and will be greatly exalted in the exerciſe of it; for, in the original, the ſame term that denotes holineſs, imports alſo mercy or compaſſion, as leading to bountiful communications. Hence it is ſaid, ver. 17. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and *holy in all his works*," or, as on the margin, *merciful, bountiful*, in all his works. If the common doctrine be true, there is neither mercy nor bounty in one of God's greateſt works, the final puniſhment of an unbelieving world. Yet upon his own authority we ſay, in that ſtrange

and terrible work, he is merciful. Another proof of this occurs in the ſame pſalm, to go no farther in queſt of one: "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," ver. 9. When will this ceaſe to be a truth? as ceaſe to be a truth it muſt, if the future puniſhment of the wicked ſhall never be over-rüled for their final good. Will the time come when God ſhall ceaſe to be good to *all*, and when his tender mercies ſhall not be over *all* his works? So ſay the abettors of the common doctrine; but in direct contradiction to the word of truth. What God doth and ſaith it ſhall be for ever, that men ſhould fear before him," Eccleſ. iii. 14. and nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is ſettled in heaven. Thy faithfulneſs is unto all generations," Pſal. cxix. 89, 90. Let men beware how they attempt to alter it, or to modify and limit the extent of its import. That ſyſtem of doctrine is to be ſuſpected as falſe, that drives to ſuch a conduct—that forces thoſe who hold it to maintain, in direct oppoſition to plain ſcripture, that the Lord neither is, nor ſhall be merciful in all his works—that he neither is, nor ſhall be good to all—and that his tender mercies neither are, nor ſhall be over all his works. The doctrine of the reſtoration plainly ſhews the truth of theſe and the like texts, even in the dread ſeverity of future puniſhment, conſidering the end of the Lord, the ultimate holineſs and happineſs of his intelligent creatures, and "that he is very pitiful and of tender mercy," James v. 11.

"The Lord ſhall riſe up, that he may do his work, his ſtrange work; and bring to paſs his act, his ſtrange act," Iſa. xxviii. 21. "Say unto them, as I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Will the Lord ſuffer that always to exiſt before his eyes in which he has no pleaſure, but the reverſe, the ſecond death, that king of terrors; and never do that in which he has pleaſure, the turning of the wicked from that death, and the evil ways which procured it? The common doctrine, and its abettors, anſwer this in the negative. "The Lord will not caſt off for ever; but though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; to cruſh under his feet all the priſoners of the earth," Lam. iii. 31.—34. Theſe things had a primary reference to the Jewiſh nation, in a moſt degenerate and calamitous period. They, however, may be conſidered as a ſtanding maxim of the Divine government, according to which God will conduct himſelf towards all men; and no period will occur when it can be reverſed.

How full to the purpoſe theſe and the like gracious declarations, which conſtitute ſo many plain axioms to regulate our faith and hope. But the force of them is evaded, by reſtricting all to the elect, as is done alſo with other ſcriptures, as if Chriſt had none committed to him but the ſheep of that fold. The received doctrine makes ſuch a reſtriction indeed neceſſary, becauſe it makes God to have caſt off all the reſt of mankind for ever, even as long as he ſhall exiſt. Why ſhould any monopolize the grace and mercy of a common Father, to the *eternal excluſion* of the far greater part of his children, who are all

without exception, the ſame by nature and practice? He knows how to take vengeance on their inventions, and yet not utterly take away his loving kindneſs, nor ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail. Let not the firſt-born think that they have an excluſive right to all the promiſes, which are Chriſt's property, and theirs in uſe only for his ſake. He may give the ſecond-born children in due time to drink of theſe wells of ſalvation alſo, and ſo feed them and lead them to fountains of living water, and wipe away all tears from their eyes, and that without any prejudice to the heirs of promiſe, whoſe glory and felicity ſhall be thereby greatly enhanced, Rev. vii. 17. Let them not then be now like too many heirs among men, who look with an invidious eye on the younger branches of the family, and are too ſeldom diſpoſed to do them juſtice; for the ſame reaſons do not hold in both caſes; as here the acceſſion of the ſecond-born to their own lot, will prove alſo an acceſſion to the inheritance and felicity of all the elder brethren; ſo that every ground of jealouſy, which is ſo ſtrong in the preſent ſtate, ſhall be eternally excluded. I have dwelt the longer on theſe things, becauſe where we are averſe to believe, we are dull of underſtanding, and ſlow of heart, as experience, alas! ſhews. Permit me to aſk, Can it be reaſonably ſuppoſed that the Lord will continue without end what he deems his ſtrange work, to which he is unwillingly brought, and yet diſcontinue, after a certain period, and that as long as he ſhall exiſt, the exerciſe of an attribute in which he delights, and which greatly tends to exalt him, though millions of very proper objects of mercy, if extreme miſery can make them ſo, always preſent themſelves to his view? This is far from being likely. What our Lord ſays of the two debtors, one of whom owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty, deſerves attention. "And when they had *nothing* to pay, he *frankly* forgave them both," Luke vii. 42. No difference in point of guilt or miſery can make any difference with God. Nay, he is moſt glorified and loved where moſt is forgiven; and why ſhould we not allow him to forgive as frankly at the reſtoration the five hundred pence debtors, as he does now the others, ſeeing they are equally unable to pay? Simon was conſtrained to own, that he who had moſt forgiven him would love moſt; and how great ſhall their love be who are brought out of the great tribulation! But to proceed,

Hath the mouth of the Lord ſaid, that "his glory ſhall be revealed, and that *all fleſh* ſhall ſee it together," Iſa. xl. 5.—that *all fleſh* ſhall come to him as the God who heareth prayer, Pſal. lxv. 2.—that it ſhall come, that he will gather *all* nations and tongues, and they ſhall come and ſee his glory, Iſa. lxvi. 18. And ſhall this never be accompliſhed? Has it no reference to *all fleſh*, as exiſting in every age; and to *all* nations, from the beginning to the end of time? Impoſſible, if the common doctrine be true. But the ſpirit knows his own mind beſt, and he teaches us to believe, that all nations whom God has made ſhall come and worſhip before him, in conſequence of having ſeen his glory, Pſal. lxxxvi. 9. This is an indiſpenſible characteriſtic of all the nations that ever did, that now do, or hereafter ſhall exiſt. The phraſe *all fleſh* denotes, in its moſt limited acceptation, all mankind: "*All fleſh* died that moved upon the earth," Gen. vii. 21.—"*all fleſh* had corrupted his way upon the

earth—the end of *all flesh* is come before me," Gen. vi. 12, 13. And we find Jehovah called "the God of the ſpirits of *all flesh*," Num. xxvii. 16. "And the voice ſaid, Cry, *all flesh* is graſs—ſurely the people are graſs," Iſa. xl.—Shall all nations, in the largeſt and fulleſt ſenſe, and all flesh ſee the glory of God together, (which imports enjoying it) and come to him as the hearer of prayer, and the object of all religious worſhip; and will any man take it upon him to prove, that all this is accompliſhed to the full in the elect, who are but one nation and not many, and in reſpect of them all but a little flock? It is very cuſtomary with man, in a fit of generoſity, to make large promiſes; but when the performance is ſolicited, they dwindle almoſt into nothing, and diſappoint the hopes to which they gave birth. Not ſo, however, the promiſes of the Almighty, though many would ſo explain and underſtand them: for the more they are graſped, inſtead of being found air, the more ſubſtantial and conſolatory will they be found. Let not men preſume to ſet up any doctrine as a ſtandard, to which they are to reduce the plaineſt texts in the Bible, though at the expence of perverting them from their natural and obvious meaning; the too common mode of expounding ſcripture, which cuſtom has now ſanctioned, by the touch of her magic wand, and for which the clergy in general ſtrenuouſly contend.

Is it promiſed, or foretold, that *all* the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before Meſſiah;—that *all* they that go down to the duſt ſhall bow before him, or do him homage, Pſal. xxii, 27, 29. that *all* the earth, or all its inhabitants, ſhall worſhip him, and ſing unto him, and to his name, without our being at liberty to reſtrict this to any period, as the extent is clearly aſcertained above, Pſal. lxvi. 4. that *all kings* ſhall fall down before him; that *all nations* ſhall ſerve him, and call him bleſſed, Pſal. lxxii. 11, 17. that he will deſtroy the veil that is over *all nations*, and make a precious feaſt for *all people*, Iſa. xxv. 6, 7. that *all* the kings of the earth ſhall praiſe him, when they hear the words of his mouth, and that they ſhall ſing in his ways, Pſal. cxxxviii. 4, 5. that *all* dominions, (margin) *all* rulers, ſhall ſerve and obey him, Dan. vii. 27. is all this, and much more to the ſame effect, promiſed in ſcripture; and can it be unreaſonable to look for the accompliſhment, as extending beyond the very limited line of the church of the firſt-born, ſeeing it cannot be proved that all this ſhall be ever fully realized within the narrow precincts of that ſacred incloſure.—We are farther told, Pſal. xxii. 29. that all they that are fat upon earth ſhall eat and worſhip. The fat on earth muſt intend the rich and opulent, who have hitherto in general been fonder of any thing than worſhipping God. The eating with which that is connected muſt be ſpiritually underſtood, and the period when both ſhall take place may be learned from the context. It is promiſed that a ſeed ſhall ſerve Meſſiah, that it ſhall be accounted to the Lord for a generation, or, as in the metrical verſion, be reckoned as ſuch in all ages. Theſe appear to be the elect, of whom it is promiſed, that they ſhall come and declare his truth and righteouſneſs to a people that ſhall be born, that he hath done this; or, as ſome render it, whom the Lord hath made, or ſhall make, referring to the people who ſhall be born, *when the ſeed*, or generation of the righteous, ſhall be completed.

Here the elect are acting in character, as priests consecrated to the service of God. Upon the common system, where shall we find a people to be born, after the elect are all gathered together, in their respective ages and countries, and made up as a generation, or holy nation to the Lord? Whence are they then to come to deliver his righteousness to the people to be born, if not, as John tells us, in the New Jerusalem, that shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

We read also of the coming of the nations to worship before God: "All nations whom thou hast made *shall come* and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name," Psal. lxxxvi. 9. God hath made of one blood all the nations that dwell at any period on the face of the earth, who shall come and worship before him. The dead that go down to the pit of the second death cannot praise God, nor hope in his mercy, till he shew wonders to them, and raise them up to praise him. Then only shall they come and worship before him, and glorify his name, which is a wonderful work, that will manifest God to be great in mercy, and the only true God. When all the nations that he has made shall come and worship before him, while seated upon his throne in the New Jerusalem, reigning before his ancients or elders gloriously, many things in his word and conduct that are now dark and veiled, will be seen in the brightness of his shining, and fill saints and angels with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—These things are so much out of the common road of our mode of thinking, that men will not believe them, though declared upon divine authority, and weary themselves to invent objections against them. Christ was crucified as an impostor, not for want of evidence of his divine mission, though more was still insisted on; and the same thing holds with the truth of his word.

When our Lord is called the first-born of every creature, and the first-born, or first-begotten from or of the dead, that in all things, or among all things or beings, he might have the pre-eminence, Colos. i. 18.; and when we attend to the privileges and trust of the first-born of old, as types of Messiah, are we not constrained to own a relation or brotherhood between him and all his works, in one form or other, whether these be living or dead, and that the rights and office of an elder brother, relative to them all, devolves on him in his mediatory character? Will he never discharge that trust with respect to the far greater part of them? Hath he neither offered sacrifice, nor made intercession for them, though the first-born, or high-priest of the dead, without exception? In Psalm 88 h, where a greater than Heman the Ezrahite may be traced, we find him interceding for the dead: "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be made known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" ver, 10, 11, 12. Each of these questions amounts to an affirmation. Wonderful as the things contained in them are, they are easy to him who has made all things by the word of his power, and shall hereafter make all things new. He is said to quicken all things, and to be appointed heir of all things. Who would envy *him the possession of his own*, or dispute against it?

The variety of expreſſion uſed in theſe verſes, applies to the dead of every deſcription, and eſpecially to thoſe of them whoſe caſe is the moſt deplorable and hopeleſs. If our Lord excludes none of the dead, if he is the Lord and the Prieſt both of the dead and the living, which he is declared to be, what are we, that we ſhould exclude any of them from the benefit of his mediation? May he not be allowed to be the reſurrection and the life commenſurate to the deſtruction of every death; ſince there is much in his word to authorize this, and nothing, properly underſtood, to forbid it? However harſh it may appear to us, one clauſe of the above, literally rendered, would be, "Shall thy loving-kindneſs be declared in *hell?*" The term is often ſo rendered in the text, and on the margin; and it is not without reaſon the Spirit of God has made choice of the ſame word, to denote the ſtate of the body after natural death, and the ſtate of future miſery. Viewing our Lord's interceſſion in this extent, what an acceſſion of importance and glory does it acquire? To this perfectly agrees the next clauſe, "Shall thy faithfulneſs be declared in deſtruction?" another term expreſſive of the ſecond death, which is called *everlaſting deſtruction*, or the deſtruction of an unknown period or age, as it might be rendered. If God ſpeaks of the dead of every ſort, under the ſame general terms, and alſo of their different ſtates, what right have we to divide them, and to limit his ſaving work to this or that claſs of them, ſeeing our Lord ever liveth to make interceſſion for them; whence he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, to perfection, or completely, all that come to God by him? Heb. vii. 25.

That early error which ſprung up in the church of Corinth, the denial of the reſurrection of the dead, prevails with the bulk of Chriſtians ſtill. "How ſay ſome among you, that there is no reſurrection of the dead?" 1 Cor. xv. 12. Why ſhould it ſeem a thing incredible to any, that God ſhould raiſe the dead in every ſenſe? for he is as able to ſhew wonders to the dead, in the grave of the ſecond death, as in any other, and to raiſe them up to praiſe him. Admitting this, what a glorious and conſiſtent view does it give us of the divine plan, compared to that partial and mutilated ſcheme which is obtruded on the world in its place? But the latter is of man's framing, and it is therefore a beloved idol, which men believe and worſhip, as the South Americans are ſaid to have worſhipped the devil in ſome of their temples, in order to eſcape his vengeance. Whatever is of God is like himſelf, and can be ſeen only by the aid of his own light. Before it triumph in the world, it is ſure to be treated as he was who came to bear witneſs to the truth, even to be crucified as an impoſtor; and that as he was, by his profeſſed people. Owing to the above, or ſimilar motives, the common doctrine can number among her zealous advocates, votaries of Bacchus, of Venus, and Mammon, and alſo mere formaliſts, and perſons who fear not an oath. But few conſider or practically believe what eternity is.

Since Peter ſpeaks of the *reſtitution*, or reſtoration *of all things*, as a truth which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of *all* his holy prophets ſince the world began, Acts iii. 21. Since Paul declares, that the *creation*, even the *whole creation*, the ſons of God excepted, will be delivered from vanity, and the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of God's children, Rom. viii. 21. and

ſince John tells us, that the glorious perſon whom he ſaw in viſion ſitting on the throne, ſaid, "Behold I make *all things* new." Rev. xxi. 5. and ſince we have clear ſigns of the times referred to in each context, which perfectly agree together, are we blame-worthy for deeming the reſtitution of all things a divine work of great importance, for inquiring into its nature, times, and extent, and for making the beſt uſe of the light the Spirit has given us for that purpoſe? If the work and the ſigns of the times or ſeaſons for performing it, mentioned by theſe three ſacred writers, are found to agree, upon examining the context, are we not juſtified in concluding that one and the ſame glorious work is intended? Surely it is more ſafe and honourable to follow ſuch guides, than thoſe who now profeſs to be their ſucceſſors, who claim an authority over their brethren's faith which *they* never claimed, and exerciſe a power over them which *they* never exerciſed, that of judging and condemning them without the formality of a trial.

It reſts with thoſe who deny the reſtoration to prove, That the reſtitution of *all things* ſhall not be a reſtitution of *all things*, that only a very few things are intended—that the delivery of the *whole creation* from the bondage of corruption, with the exception only of the children of God, who ſhall be previouſly delivered, ſhall not be a delivery of the *whole creation*—and that the making of *all things* new, however ſolemnly announced as a true and faithful ſaying, ſhall never prove a renovation of *all things*—that former things, with the far greater part of God's intelligent creatures, ſhall never paſs away. They muſt prove, that theſe, and the like univerſal phraſes, which have no figure or ambiguity in the language, muſt be diveſted of their univerſality, and compreſſed in a diminiſhing machine, ſo as to reduce them to the ſtandard of the common ſyſtem. If they can do this by clear ſcripture evidence, that ſyſtem will be tenable, and the doctrine of the final reſtoration of *all things* overturned, though not much to the credit of the conſiſtency of the ſacred writings. Some people's faith, in the eternal damnation of their fellow creatures, is firmly rooted indeed, when ſuch conſiderations cannot move it. But it is a miracle if it can reſt, not in the wiſdom of man, but in the power of God, after all that the oracles of truth ſay to ſupport the oppoſite ſyſtem. Reſerving farther proof of the final reſtoration to a future opportunity, and praying the wiſdom from above may enter into our heart, and knowledge be pleaſant to our ſoul; that diſcretion may preſerve us, and the underſtanding of the holy keep us, to deliver from the way of thoſe who leave the paths of uprightneſs, to walk in the ways of darkneſs, Prov. ii.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours to ſerve you in the truth, &c.

LETTER V.

The Lord ſaid, their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; therefore the wiſdom of their wiſe men ſhall periſh, and the underſtanding of their prudent men ſhall be hid—But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.—Ceaſe ye from man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?—Thus ſaith the Lord, Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord: For he ſhall be like the heath in the deſert, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh—Iſa. xxix. 13, 14. Mat. xv. 9. Iſa. ii. 22. Jer. xvii. 5, 6.

Dear Sir,

THERE is nothing more apt to prevent our ſeeing the good word of God, when it cometh in its own native purity and ſimplicity, than the undue influence of human wiſdom and authority. This made the diſcourſes of our Lord and his apoſtles to prove to the Jews a ſtumbling block, and to appear to the learned Greeks fooliſhneſs. The ſame cauſe produces ſimilar effects to this day. With many, it would weigh much more in favour of the reſtoration, could you produce the opinion of ſuch and ſuch a learned and pious man, whom they have been accuſtomed to revere, in ſupport of it, than if you were to bring twenty authorities from the writings of Paul, and his brother apoſtles. Let us, however, be content to appeal to the law and teſtimony.

It remains to be proved, that the viſion in the 21ſt of the Revelation has a retroſpect to events that took place long before, and not to any thing to be accompliſhed after the laſt judgment, as the progreſſive order of events in that book would naturally lead us to expect. The 20th chapter contains an account of the firſt and laſt reſurrection; the millennium, the deſtruction of the vaſt army of Gog and Magog; the laſt judgment; and the execution of the final ſentence. Then may we ſuppoſe Chriſt ſhall aſcend to heaven, and preſent before his Father's throne the firſt fruits of the univerſal harveſt, or the whole church of the firſt-born, in their complete glorified perſons, like a chaſte virgin, without ſpot, wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. How long the ſolemn period between the laſt judgment and the manifeſtation of the ſons of God, at the deſcent of the New Jeruſalem, may be, none can determine. During this conſolatory period to the righteous, but awful one to the wicked, the gates of the infernal priſon ſhall remain ſhut, and every hope in the boſom of the priſoners, if they ſhall have any, ſhall entirely give up the ghoſt. Perhaps the apoſtle has in his eye the puniſhment to be then endured, when he ſpeaks of the doctrine of *eternal judgment*, which he ſubjoins to that of the reſurrection of the dead, Heb. vi. 12. The term rendered judgment denotes alſo the execution of judgment, or of the ſentence; and the phraſe might be literally rendered the *puniſhment or damnation of the age*, or the *age-laſting damnation or puniſhment*. During this awful age, the conflagration of the earth is going on, which, in its liquidated ſtate, ſome ſuppoſe to be the lake which ſhall burn with *fire and brimſtone, which is* the ſecond death. At the deſcent of

New Jeruſalem, with which a new viſion opens in the 21ſt chapter, John ſaw a new heaven and a new earth, which God will create from the refined matter of the old; theſe, as to their form and groſs ſubſtance, having paſſed away, and the whole watery element being abſorbed by the devouring flames, whence he ſaw no more ſea, Iſa. lxv. 17, 18. & lxvi. 22. 2 Pet. iii. 13.

Intenſe as the devouring flames of the general conflagration muſt be, the deſtruction of all the groſs matter of the earth will, in all probability, be a work of very conſiderable duration. We know the conflagration will ſucceed the laſt judgment, yet muſt precede the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteouſneſs ſhall dwell. This clearly fixes the æra of the deſcent of the New Jeruſalem, and refutes the common notions reſpecting it; becauſe John ſaw the new heaven and the new earth already formed from the remains of the old, before he ſaw that great city, the holy Jeruſalem, deſcending out of heaven from God, in a perfect and glorified ſtate! Rev. xxi. 1, 2, 10. This naturally, and indeed neceſſarily, leads to place the things fortold to be then accompliſhed in a period of time long after the laſt judgment, which our tranſlation calls *for ever*, and ſometimes *for ever and ever*, literally *for the age*, and *for the age of ages*, the prepoſition alſo ſignifying *to*, *during*, or throughout. That period may be called the *age of ages*, or ſometimes, by way of eminence, *the age*, for the ſame reaſon that the book of Canticles is called the *Song of Songs*, or the moſt excellent of all ſongs. The New Jeruſalem period, after its deſcent from above, may with propriety be called the moſt excellent of all the ages, both in reſpect of its duration, and alſo of the glorious work to be accompliſhed during its continuance, the reſtoration of *all things*. In the book of Pſalms, all lands, and all the earth, or mankind of all deſcriptions, are exhorted, as in the original, to keep a jubilee to the Lord, with univerſal joy and praiſe. If we exclude the final reſtoration of all things, and the New Jeruſalem ſtate on earth, in which it is to be accompliſhed, we can find no period under the Meſſiah's reign to correſpond to the jubilee under the law.

The millennium is the antitype or ſubſtance of the ſabbatical year; and the laſt age of Chriſt's reign the antitype of the jubilee, which contained ſeven ſabbatical years, or 49 years excluſive. If the millennium be no more than a thouſand natural years, then the age of ages will conſiſt of ſeven thouſand; but if the millennium conſiſts of prophetical years, as ſome contend, taking a day for a year, then the age of ages will extend to the very long period of *two millions five hundred and fifty-five thouſand years*, ſeven times the length of the millennium, if made up of prophetical years. Which of theſe periods is the right one I pretend not to determine, for both ſides have their advocates, and much may be urged on either. Tho' the releaſe of priſoners may commence at the beginning of this grand year of releaſe, yet it appears from ſcripture that ſome will remain ſhut up in miſery till toward the cloſe; for the ſmoke of their torment is ſaid to aſcend up *for ever and ever*, or for the age of ages. Should any of our zealous advocates for the common doctrine get this time of it, will they *think it enough? or will* they be diſpoſed to ſay, with one of their brethren *whom I had occaſion lately* to converſe with on the ſubject, "I could give my

vote that thoſe who die in their ſins under the goſpel, ſhould be eternally tormented in hell, though I myſelf were among the number?"—ſwelling words of vanity! This heroic ſpeech was ſurely no proof that he had paſſed from death to life, elſe he would love even miſerable brethren with a love of compaſſion; for the elect of God put on bowels of mercy. Thoſe who moſt need mercy are leaſt diſpoſed to extend it to others. Many, in their furious zeal, which they ſubſtitute for godlineſs, know not what they ſay, or whereof they affirm.

Our bleſſed Lord expreſsly declares, That the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo, becauſe he is the Son of man, John v. 22, 27. If the judging of the wicked, and the executing judgment upon them, implies their puniſhment, as it doubtleſs does; and if that be continued after Chriſt delivers up the kingdom to the Father, the queſtion naturally occurs, Who ſhall then judge them, or execute judgment upon them? We are aſſured the Father will not do it, having committed *all judgment* to the Son, who, cannot, however, be ſuppoſed to do it after he delivers up his whole mediatory adminiſtration to his Father, of which puniſhment or correction made, all along, a conſpicuous and neceſſary part. This argument is neither dark nor forced: But how to reconcile our Lord's aſſertion to the common doctrine I know not. Let thoſe reconcile it who are obliged, upon their principles, to maintain that Chriſt will continue to execute judgment on the wicked after he delivers up his kingdom, even to all eternity, which is inconſiſtent with delivering it up; or they muſt prove that the Father will then begin to execute judgment upon them, contrary to our Lord's declaration, that he hath committed *all judgment* to the Son; a commiſſion, we may reſt ſatisfied, not to be retracted while there is occaſion for executing judgment. How ſhall they get over this dilemma? But wiſdom will be juſtified of her children, and will juſtify them in return.

The Apoſtle John twice tells us, within the compaſs of a few verſes, *God is love*, 1 John iv. 8. 16. But does not the common doctrine ſay, that God is not ſo eſſentially love, as not to baniſh love entirely from his heart in his dealings with the far greater part of his intelligent creatures, puniſhing them with relentleſs and vindictive vengeance while he and they exiſt, without glory to his juſtice, pleaſure to himſelf, or to his ſaints and holy angels; and as for profit to the poor puniſhed culprits, the very idea is deemed hereſy of the worſt kind? Do fathers on earth ſo puniſh their children? and yet the very beſt of them are evil when compared to God, who afflicts none willingly. Their paternal affection, contraſted with his love, bears not the proportion of a drop to the ocean. What evil have we or our fathers found in him, that we ſhould aſcribe to him a paternal adminiſtration ſo very defective, and ſo awfully vindictive? Admit for a moment that the common doctrine is not true, and the aſſerting of it is not only an impious calumny, but daring blaſphemy; what cannot be ſaid of the other doctrine, though it ſhould prove unfounded. This is ſurely enough to ſecure it the juſtice due to every felon, that of a fair trial, before it be condemned. The Judge is at the door, with the balance and the ſword.

Many profeſſors, inſtead of being inclined to the ſide of mercy, in their fears

for truth, after the example of our Father in heaven, who is merciful, like Jonah, they ſeem more concerned for the honour of their own ſyſtems, than for their Maker's honour, and the felicity of their fellow ſinners. Jonah was evidently more intereſted for his own honour as a prophet, than for the deſired ſucceſs of his meſſage, and happineſs of his own ſpecies. He thought he did well to be angry even to the death, becauſe God ſhewed them mercy contrary to his opinion and wiſhes; and had the preſumption to avow the impious thought in his Maker's preſence. His attempt to juſtify his diſobedience, reflected diſgrace upon himſelf, but glory on that God who is love, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works; as every ſuch attempt muſt always do. "I knew that thou art a gracious God, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil," Jon. iv. 2. Many think they do well to be angry at every attempt to make this truth known, and at every perſon who would declare it. The Lord himſelf ſpeaks the ſame truth by the prophet Joel—"Therefore alſo now, ſaith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil," Joel ii. 12, 13. When will this ceaſe to be his character and memorial? "Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord," ſaid the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 156. Great are his tender mercies, and he is great and highly exalted in exerciſing them, and will not deny himſelf this honour to gratify friends or enemies. O to reſemble him who is goodneſs itſelf! If the throne of an earthly king is upheld by mercy, as the royal proverbialiſt tells us, Prov. xx. 28. will mercy forſake the throne of the King of kings, while the far greater part of his offspring is in miſery, and leave them in that place without end? Shall mercy remain always hid from his eyes, however much the exerciſe of it might redound to his glory, and the happineſs of others? Let who will tread in Jonah's ſteps, may it be our ambition and attainment to copy ſo divine an example, though this ſhould procure us oppoſition and reproach!" The Lord make us to increaſe and abound in love one toward another, and toward *all men*," Theſſ. iii. 12.

We are told that Meſſiah ſhall inherit *all nations*, Pſal. lxxxii. 8.—that he is *heir of the world*, Rom. iv. 13—and that God hath appointed him *heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2.—told that the *heathen*, or nations, ſhall be given him at his requeſt, as his inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion, without reſtricting the grant to any one age, Pſal. ii. 8. But ſhall he never enjoy theſe as his inheritance and poſſeſſion? According to the prevailing faith on this point, he never ſhall, the far greater part of the very nobleſt of them being doomed to remain for ever in ſuch a ſtate, that he can have no connection with them, or derive due glory from them. That faith maintains, that he will never ſubdue his whole inheritance to himſelf, or receive from the greater part of it any voluntary revenue; though we are aſſured, that by reaſon of the greatneſs of his power, his enemies ſhall ſubmit themſelves to him, and that he muſt reign until he hath ſubdued *all things* to himſelf.

The end or cloſe of his adminiſtration will not come, till "he ſhall have put *an all rule, and all authority*, and power. For he muſt reign till he hath

put *all* enemies under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. Death, the very laſt of theſe enemies in exiſtence, ſhall be deſtroyed; whence no enemy can ſurvive the date of his reign and exiſtence. It is one of the greateſt of myſteries, or rather a direct impoſſibility, that *all* rule, and *all* authority, and power ſhould be put down by our Lord, whoſe work is perfect, and that he ſhould deſtroy death as the very laſt enemy that ſhould exiſt, and yet that ſin, Satan, and death ſhould exiſt and reign without end, and as many enemies as there ſhall be devils and wicked men in hell.

To me it appears impoſſible to prove from ſcripture, that the ſecond death is not intended by the laſt enemy, that being the only death in exiſtence at the period to which the Spirit ſeems to refer, 1 Cor. xv. 26. Rev. xxi. 4. Natural death cannot be called an enemy, in any ſenſe, to the righteous; for it is only then they begin to live, the day of their death being better than the day of their birth. But admit it to be their enemy in that caſe, it cannot be called the laſt, even with regard to them; for the grave follows, which would then be an enemy too. How very different does Paul teach us to think of both? Addreſſing himſelf to real Chriſtians, he ſaith, "All things are yours; whether life, or death," &c. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. Their death is called a ſleep, and the grave agreeably a bed of reſt. That which terminates their ſtate of ſinning, ſorrow, and conflict, and opens for them the gates of immortality, tranſlating them ſafely to the poſſeſſion of everlaſting manſions in their heavenly Father's houſe, cannot with any propriety be called their enemy.

The wicked are out of the queſtion; for natural death is neither their laſt nor greateſt enemy. To them there is a death beyond it, towhich the character of the *king of terrors* properly belongs. I think it is evident to a demonſtration, that the firſt death cannot be intended, as applied either to the righteous or the wicked. We muſt, therefore, extend the period when it ſhall be deſtroyed, far beyond the day of judgment, even towards the cloſe of the New Jeruſalem ſtate, or deny that any ſhall be puniſhed after that day. And we muſt admit, that the enemies, of whom it ſhall be the laſt, muſt refer to ſuch as ſhall be found then in exiſtence, and not to any that annoy the righteous in this life. The ſecond death then muſt be that laſt enemy, whoſe deſtruction is threatened and foretold. This one point eſtabliſhed, and let who can diſprove it, is ſufficient to overturn the whole fabric of endleſs miſery, which is built on the common ſyſtem. The common, and indeed only evaſion is, that it is natural death which the apoſtle intends, and that with regard to the elect, when raiſed from the grave at the laſt day. That this cannot be the ſenſe of the apoſtle's declaration, read without the ſupplement, "The laſt enemy death ſhall be deſtroyed," is evinced above, it is hoped, to the ſatisfaction of the candid.

Does it not reflect on Chriſt to ſuppoſe, that millions of beings, given him out of love by his Father as his inheritance, ſhould notwithſtanding, always remain the prey of ſin and miſery, and the degraded wretched vaſſals of Satan? Will the far greater part of his inheritance remain for ever, like the garden of the ſluggard, all overgrown with briars, and thorns, and noxious weeds, and the fence of it broken down? Will he thus violate his Father's appointment, as

transfer to another all right to his accepted and purchaſed heritage and poſſeſſion? Far be it from us to impute ſuch conduct to him. "Chriſt is all in all."

Though, even in the reign of Solomon, the remote boundaries of the land promiſed to the fathers were not poſſeſſed by the ſeed of Abraham; yet ſhall it not be ſo with Meſſiah! No Cannanite ſhall be allowed to poſſeſs his inheritance for ever; nor will he leave ſo much as a hoof in the poſſeſſion of Pharaoh, before he have done with the outpouring of the vials of his wrath; to which every Chriſtian ſhould ſay, Amen!—Let men ſay what they will, there muſt be ſomething egregiouſly wrong in a doctrine that obliges us to aſcribe ſuch inconſiſtencies to the Son of God, whoſe every work is perfect, and who ſtands engaged by ſolemn promiſe to make every thing committed to him *new*. There is nothing included in the reſtoration of *all things* but what is worthy of him as Creator, Preſerver, and Redeemer, what is alſo within the reach of his power to accompliſh, and admirably calculated to advance his glory. Why ſhould it then ſeem incredible?

Some, in their wiſdom, make the eternity of hell torments neceſſary to the exiſtence, if not to the unceaſing duration of heavenly bliſs. Hence the following expreſſions of a certain famed preacher: "The damnation of the wicked conſtitutes an eſſential part of the happineſs of the righteous! Hell ſhall eternally ſend up a ſweetneſs to heaven, and heaven ſhall eternally ſend down a darkneſs to hell!" Great ſwelling words of vanity, though by ſome admired as the very marrow of the goſpel. What a reflection on the divine wiſdom, as if God could not make one part of his creation happy, without ſubjecting the other to endleſs and unremitted miſery! No wonder thoſe who think ſo ſhould be alarmed at the doctrine of the reſtoration, as fearing a diminution of their own happineſs. This antichriſtian notion is very unlike what our Lord ſays of the ſenſations of the bleſſed at the converſion of a ſinner: "Joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth.—There is joy in the preſence of the angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth,"*Luke xv. 7, 10. If the preſervation of a ſinner from extreme miſery occaſion ſuch joy in heaven, what will the recovery of millions produce? The joy of the reſtoration therefore may well be compared to the joy of harveſt, inſtead of leſſening the felicity of the bleſſed, as ſome would make it.

How ſhall we account for the obvious meaning of many paſſages of ſcripture, if we exclude the reſtitution of all things, or ſo explain it away as to amount to an excluſion? Is our Lord *the head of every man?* 1 Cor. xi. 3, yea, given *to be the head over all things to the church*, which imports their relation to him, Eph i. 22. and *did he aſcend up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things*, beſides his church, *which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all?* Eph. iv. 10—i. 23. and is all this conſiſtent with Satan's poſſeſſing *every man*, and *all things* as long as God exiſts, elect angels and men excepted? If God purpoſed in himſelf, that this ſhould really be the caſe, why uſe ſuch language frequently in his word as clearly conveys a very different view of his adminiſtration? Chriſt's univerſal temple appears from ſcripture to comprehend many more than elect angels and men; and we may reſt aſſured he will not ſuffer it to remain always a den of thieves, into which the prieſts have converted and proſtituted it.—*The Lord haſten* the purging of the temple already in exiſtence.

If God would not permit the patrimony, or inheritance of an Iſraelite, to be forfeited beyond the year of jubilee, when it was reſtored to the proper owner of his family, or leave it in the power of any of Abraham's ſeed to alienate it beyond recovery, let any man ſay, if it be reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that his wiſe and merciful plan of redemption has left it in the power of his frail erring offspring, to ruin their ſouls beyond recovery, and place themſelves beyond all poſſibility of attaining holineſs, or the leaſt meaſure of happineſs to all eternity? The loſs ſuſtained may be great and irremediable, like Eſau's loſs when he deſpiſed the birthright, and loſt the bleſſing; but our heavenly Father has more than one bleſſing to beſtow, a bleſſing for the ſeed of the bond woman, though of an inferior nature, as well as for the ſeed of the free. Could twelve or thirteen acres of land, the quantity that fell to the ſhare of each man upon the diviſion of Canaan, be more precious in God's account, or better guarded by what we may call an agrarian law, than millions of his nobleſt creatures are, by his plan of mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, one of whom, he himſelf being judge, is of more value than the whole material world? In the words of Paul, Does God care for oxen? Does he care for a few acres of earth? Hath he not taught us by that care how precious his own inheritance is in his ſight, and how he has deviſed means by which his baniſhed may be reſtored? It would be very unlike the provident care of a wiſe and beneficent parent, to put it in the power of a fooliſh and prodigal ſon to ſquander away his whole patrimony. When one adverts to theſe things, they will be found to merit ſome attention in this controverſy, which reſts not however on ſuch arguments, though it derives illuſtration and ſome degree of proof from them.

We may view God as addreſſing men in the words of Solomon, "Hear, ye children, the inſtruction of a father, and attend to underſtanding:—Hear, O my ſon, and receive my ſayings; and the years of thy life ſhall be many," thy happineſs ſhall be of immortal duration:—"My ſon, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my ſayings," Prov. chap. iv. Are the ſayings of our heavenly Father, which he addreſſes to his children, dark and equivocal ſayings, as many repreſent them?

Does not the exiſtence of every man depend on a ſovereign act of God's will? "He hath made us, and not we ourſelves," Pſal. c. 3. Can we ſuppoſe that he calls any man, or any being into exiſtence, without having ſome purpoſe reſpecting him? What can that purpoſe be? Can it be that the creature, which owes its being to him, ſhould be eternally happy or miſerable? To ſuppoſe the laſt, would be to tax God with the want of wiſdom. To ſuppoſe that he formed any creature to be eternally miſerable, would be to arraign his infinite goodneſs. And to admit that he made intelligent creatures for happineſs, but that ſin marred his deſign, and that the far greater part of them ſhall never be brought to anſwer the end of their creation, would deny him preſcience, or repreſent him as diſappointed in his object, or unable to bring it to paſs. To maintain that his love to the bulk of men fulfils all its intended effects in giving them food and raiment on earth, is ſuch a horrid reflection on the all-beautiful Creator, that I know not if that *it* falls ſhort of blaſphemy. Let any one read

what the Pſalmiſt ſays, "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compaſſion, and gracious; long-ſuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth," Pſal. lxxxvi. 15. and ſay if it accords with ſuch an impious notion. If he did not provide better things for them than thoſe which periſh in the uſing, and ſecure to them the enjoyment, we have reaſon to believe, he would be aſhamed to be called *their Lord*, the head of *every man*, and to repreſent himſelf by his Spirit as filling *all things* as his temple. As they owe their being to him, ſo in him they live, move, and have that being, which ſhews it is to anſwer nobler ends than many will admit. Let none attempt to rob him of the due glory of his works.

In ſcripture the Jews ſeem to be chiefly, if not ſolely, intended by Meſſiah's people, he becoming, in the firſt inſtance, their brother, as the promiſed ſeed of Abraham. "His name ſhall be called Jeſus; for he ſhall ſave *his people* from their ſins." "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," John i. 11. But the time will come when they ſhall ſay, reſpecting him, "Hoſannah—Bleſſed is the King of Iſrael that cometh in the name of the Lord," John xii. 13. Mat. xxiii. 39. Paul tells us how Meſſiah ſhall ſave *his people* from their ſins: "*All Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved; as it is written, There ſhall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon *all*," Rom. xi. 26, 32. The margin reads it, "God hath ſhut them *all* up together," &c. Jeſus ſhall ſave all Iſrael as his people from their ſins, of which ſalvation his very name is a pledge and ſecurity. The common gloſs given to this predictive promiſe, is, that all the elect ſhall be ſaved, who are viewed as the Iſrael intended, or that Meſſiah ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from the ſeed of Jacob, who ſhall be found on earth at the millennium. But the leaſt attention to the apoſtle's chain of reaſoning may correct this miſtake. He evidently ſpeaks of the unbelieving part of that people, that part to which ungodlineſs ſtill cleaves, and who have had no intereſt in the ſalvation by Chriſt, till he ſhall come out of Zion as a deliverer, which ſhall take place at the times of the reſtitution of all things. The verb *to ſave*, ſignifies not only to preſerve from that miſery to which guilt expoſes, or the wrath to come, in which ſenſe it is peculiar to thoſe who believe in this life, but alſo to recover or reſtore from a ſtate of actual miſery, whether greater or leſs in duration and degree. Thus it is applied often in the original to the cure or healing of the body, which conſiſts in a reſtoring of it to a former ſound ſtate. And thus, too, men are ſaved in the preſent life, when delivered from the guilt and dominion of ſin. Though comparatively few of the ſeed of Jacob have been ſaved in this laſt ſenſe, yet all Iſrael, that have periſhed through unbelief, are capable of being ſaved in the other. Paul tells us, that they are all beloved for the father Abraham's ſake, and that God's gifts and callings to them in that patriarch, or root of their nation, are without repentance; whence he, as the root, being holy, the apoſtle tells us, the branches ſhall be holy alſo. Shall God's electing love, in conſequence of which, the whole race, even in every age, are ſtill *beloved*, never be productive of any ſaving benefit to the whole. Even in *Hades* Dives was taught, by Abraham himſelf, to claim the relation, "Nay, Father Abraham," &c. Luke xvi. 30. Shall a ſon *of Abraham be for ever loſt*, while the relation is owned on both ſides?

When our Lord says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be *one fold* and *one Shepherd*," John x. 16. it is more than probable he has something in his view far beyond the sense commonly attached to that passage. We have no authority to restrict the *other sheep* to the elect among the Gentiles, as is commonly done. It was not the Jewish, but the Christian church our Lord intended by the fold, or rather, the true church of the first-born, made up of believing Jews and Gentiles. All these, even in their collective capacity, make up one household, even the household of faith, and consequently but one fold. What hinders then, that we should view the real meaning to be, that the *rest of mankind* are the *other sheep* of Christ, *given to him* by his Father, and that they shall, in the time or period appointed, be brought to *hear his voice*, so as that the *whole human race*, however diversified their rank, degree of glory, and place of habitation, shall make one fold, in the great universal temple, under one Shepherd? In the 15th verse, he says, "I laid down my life for the sheep;" and the scriptures authorise us to say, That he gave his life a *ransom for all*, and *tasted death for every man*, and that the Father has given all things into his hands, for purposes clearly enough ascertained in his word, and than all that is given to him shall so come to him, one time or other, as not to be cast out.

In the 2d Psalm Messiah is desired of his Father to ask of him, and he would give him the heathen for his inheritance, and, or even, the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. The request was made, and the grant confirmed. The term *heathen* in the original here, and often elsewhere, is *nations*, called the *Gentiles*, as distinguished from the Jews, and both including the whole human race. Is the grant then complete, if we confine its accomplishment to a very few from among the nations, or its full completion to any one detached period of time? Are not the men of all generations equally the offspring of the Deity, and equally included in the general terms Jews and Gentiles? Who gave us a right then to cut off the far greater part of them, to all eternity, from any interest in his paternal regard, when his promise and his oath include them all? Too many even professed Christians give away their own children to the devil, by the education they give them, and the example they set before them, and that upon their own professed belief, to all eternity; but let them not presume to think that God is a Father like themselves.

Though Messiah shall, in the first instance, break the rebellious and idolatrous nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, yet all this will be only in order to make them up anew into vessels of honour, fitted for his own use. He shall inherit all nations, even all the nations that shall ever exist, Psal. lxxxii. 8. and they all shall be blessed in him, and call him blessed, in so full a sense as to include every family that ever existed among them, even all the nations, kindreds, and families of the earth. That *all the nations that forget God shall be turned into hell*, is too plainly asserted to admit of a moment's doubt, Psal. ix. 17. If that is to be their eternal abode, how shall we reconcile the plainest texts of scripture to such an issue of the divine administration respecting them?—But can we be justified in disbelieving their plain and obvious meaning;

though the promiſe and the very oath of God be interpoſed, theſe two immutable things, in which it is impoſſible he ſhould lie, deceive, or miſlead? What is it that makes ſuch liberty neceſſary, but an undue deference to the creeds and ſyſtems of men? which, in too many points, if the doctrine of the reſtoration cannot be overturned, contradict the word of truth, inſult common ſenſe, ſhut up the bowels of God's compaſſion on his offspring, and furniſh a libel on his character and adminiſtration. How glorious and God-like the plan exhibited above, compared to this!

Our Lord's empire is univerſal, over Jews and Gentiles, throughout the whole earth, and equally extends to all generations, though we ſee them not, yet equally ſubjected to his authority; which will be the glorious work of the age of ages, when he ſhall reſtore and make all things new. Shall we not then pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, thy kingdom come," to this extent.—But it is time I ſhould conclude this epiſtle. May we have the honour and happineſs to be numbered among the firſt-born here, that the ſecond death may have no power over us! I am,

Dear Sir,

Cordially yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

The words of the Lord are pure: as ſilver tried in a furnace of earth, purified ſeven times.—Be not wiſe in thine own eyes.—My ſon, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my ſayings.—He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer ſhall be abomination, Pſal. xii. 6. Prov. iii. 7.—ix. 20.—xxviii. 9.

Dear Sir,

ACCORDING to Paul, the baſis of true religion conſiſts in the cordial belief of God's being and remunerative goodneſs. "He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him," Heb. xi. 6. Diſcoveries of God's love, mercy and beneficence, are the cords of love, and the bands of a man, with which he draws to the obedience of faith. Though many make the belief of the eternity of hell torments an eſſential part of true religion, and wantonly condemn the perſon that denies or doubts it as an heretic of the worſt kind, the apoſtle does not make the belief of future puniſhment at all a firſt principle in the faith of the goſpel; and he doubtleſs knew as much of his Maſter's will, and was as faithful in declaring it, as any of our modern ſages.

Does not the common doctrine contradict the plain import of theſe ſcripture figures, which the Holy Spirit employs to repreſent the vaſt increaſe of our Lord's willing ſubjects? Are they not compared, in point of number, to the ſtars of heaven, and the ſand upon the ſea-ſhore, which cannot be numbered *for multitude, Gen. xxii.* 17.—xxxii. 12. to the ſpires of graſs which clothe the

face of the earth, and the drops of dew from the womb of the morning? Pſal. lxxii. 16.—cx. 3. Are not theſe figures too comprehenſive to be confined to the elect, who are repreſented as the firſt-fruits, and a little flock? Do not we find them numbered in the ſealed ones, who repreſent the church of the firſt-born, in her collective capacity; from which the great multitude, that no man can number, is diſtinguiſhed? Rev. chap. vii. and i. 4. The former bear the ſpecial characters, and enjoy the ſpecial privileges of the elect, none of which are aſcribed to the latter, as may be ſeen by conſulting the ſacred text. Surely the Spirit of God would not employ ſimilies in his word, that can have no relation to fact. If the number of thoſe who ſhall reap the benefit of our Lord's mediation, may be compared to the ſtars of heaven, the ſand of the ſea, the drops of dew, and the graſs of the earth, will not this include the whole human race, be their number ever ſo great? Let us not be afraid of exceeding, as many ſeem to be, in our conceptions, of the amplitude of our Redeemer's works: *The works of the Lord are great.---Many, O Lord, are thy wonderful works.— Conſider the wondrous works of God.---Oh that men would praiſe the Lord for his wonderful works to the children of men!* Thoſe who deny the reſtoration, detract greatly from his wonderful works, and conſequently from his glory. Give him time, and he will make every thing beautiful in its ſeaſon. "He that ſat upon the throne ſaid, Behold I make all things new."

If the debaſement, ſufferings, and death of Chriſt, gave abundant ſatisfaction to Divine juſtice, as is commonly admitted or aſſerted, or if theſe made a ſufficient atonement for ſin, whence, as the prophet expreſſes it, he has finiſhed tranſgreſſion, and made an end of ſin, or ſuperceded the neceſſity of any ſubſequent ſin-offering; why ſend that juſtice to ſeek a ſatisfaction from the wicked, which it is acknowledged they can never give? If he be allowed, as the Lamb of God, to have taken away the ſin of the world, with regard to atonement, John i. 29. then future puniſhment will reſt upon the baſis of corrective love, where we would naturally expect all paternal chaſtiſement to reſt; and cannot be viewed as a ſatisfaction to juſtice, but as a ſalutary mean over which mercy preſides, as ſhe indeed does over all God's works, to bring about an end every way worthy of the ever-bleſſed Creator and Redeemer of all, his own glory in the final reſtoration and happineſs of his intelligent creatures. To deny that this is God's end in inflicting penal evil on his offspring, is to deny him the honour of his paternal character, and defame his adminiſtration. As moral evil brought penal evil into the world, ſo, under Meſſiah's benign government, penal evil or ſufferings ſhall be made ſubſervient to the utter abolition of moral evil, or the entire deſtruction of the works of the devil. As darkneſs in the courſe of nature makes the return of light more welcome and pleaſant, ſo the night of correction and ſorrow tends to enhance the joy of returning proſperity and peace, and to ſecure their due improvement. Perhaps frail erring creatures are incapable, from their very nature, of enjoying great and uninterrupted happineſs, without experiencing, in ſome meaſure, previous diſtreſs and miſery. We know this is the courſe God has taken, and that is ſufficient to aſcertain its wiſdom. Upon the reſtoration ſcheme, we ſee the wiſeſt reaſons for permitting moral evil to enter among th

rational works of God, and following it with penal ſuffering; but on the common ſyſtem this is quite unaccountable.

Scripture exhortations amount, in certain caſes, to real predictions. This is often obſervable in the book of Pſalms. The 66th, as alſo the 100th, are introduced with a call to *all lands* to keep a jubilee to the Lord. The ſequel ſhews the nature of that jubilee, that men who are alive to God, through faith in Jeſus, alone can obſerve it. None but ſuch can ſing forth the honour of his name, and make his praiſe glorious, by word and deed: none but ſuch can ſerve him with gladneſs, and come before him in acts of religious worſhip with praiſe. They are commanded to know that Jehovah alone is God, the author of their being, and that they are his people, and the ſheep of his paſture; a ſolemn truth forgotten in all lands. They are exhorted to enter his gates with thankſgiving, and his courts with praiſe; to be thankful to him, and to bleſs his holy name. Theſe three reaſons are aſſigned, "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlaſting; and his truth endureth to all generations." Upon theſe the reſtoration is founded; for God's goodneſs determines him to bring it to paſs; his mercy is everlaſting, or endureth to the cloſe of the final age of Meſſiah's reign to accompliſh it, and his truth in foretelling and promiſing it, is to all generations, and equally includes them all, though ſome will be more honoured than others, with a greater number of his elect, the firſt-born, to whom pertains the right of primogeniture.

It will be by terrible works in righteouſneſs, that the Lord ſhall accompliſh the purpoſes of his mercy. Hence men are thus addreſſed, "Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatneſs of thy power ſhall thine enemies ſubmit themſelves unto thee," Pſal. lxvi. 3. To underſtand this, as intending only feigned ſubmiſſion, would be to think the glorious antitype Meſſiah, beneath Solomon his type, who, as ſuch, received not feigned, but real ſubmiſſion, from the kings of the earth, in the name of their people, 1 Chron. ix. 23, 24. Is it feigned ſubmiſſion Chriſt receives from his elect, who are doubtleſs included? for they are at one time enemies to him in their minds, and by wicked works, as well as others. The common doctrine makes it neceſſary that it ſhould be ſuch a ſubmiſſion; but the next verſe clearly proves the reverſe, and ſhews the connection between God's terrible works, and the univerſal reſtoration. "All the earth ſhall worſhip thee, and ſhall ſing unto thee, they ſhall ſing to thy name." Says Dr Horne on this verſe, "A day is coming when this ſhall be the caſe, in an unlimited ſenſe of the words." Is this the work of hypocrites? for ſo the common ſyſtem, and the common interpretation of this paſſage makes it. We are told that there is no ſcripture or prophecy of private interpretation, and that the truth of the Lord endureth to all generations. Hence the liberty taken of reſtricting the accompliſhment of this and ſimilar predictions to one period of time, the millenium, to the excluſion of every other, ſtands condemned by the word of God itſelf, and contradicts plain ſcripture fact; for if all the earth ſhall worſhip God, and ſing unto him during that auſpicious period, how ſhall we muſter the vaſt army of Gog and Magog, that ſhall be ſo hoſtile to the *church as to ſeek* her deſtruction?

We are invited to come and ſee the works of the Lord, and are told that he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men; which is perfectly conſiſtent with the final iſſue of his grand proceſs; for he brings his deſigns to paſs by means of apparent contraries. In the light of the doctrine of the reſtoration we can eaſily read the import of ſuch texts as theſe: "How excellent is thy loving kindneſs, O God! therefore the children of men put their truſt under the ſhadow of thy wings---And it ſhall come to paſs afterward, that I will pour out my ſpirit upon *all fleſh*, Pſal. xxxvi. 7. Joel ii. 28. The common doctrine obliges us to take the pruning knife here, and to lop off the far greater part of this tree of life, making only a ſmall part of the children of men to put their truſt under the ſhadow of Meſſiah's wings; and that inſtead of pouring his ſpirit upon *all fleſh*, or all mankind, not above one perhaps in ten thouſand ſhall ever enjoy that privilege. Upon ſuch a ſuppoſition, the Pſalmiſt's queſtion comes home with peculiar force, "Wherefore haſt thou made all men in vain?" Pſal. lxxxix. 47. all men who are ſuppoſed to periſh eternally, in whoſe deſtruction not a ſingle perfection of Deity can be glorified; for juſtice cannot, elſe it would releaſe the priſoner; and the other attributes are out of queſtion. All the earth, then, or all the people that have lived, or ſhall ever live upon it, ſhall worſhip the Lord, and ſing unto him, even to his holy name; for ſo the juſt interpretation of his word authoriſes us to aſſert.

The common doctrine obliges us to prove, that though it be ſaid, "The Lord looſeth the priſoners," Pſal. cxlvi. 7.; he will looſe only ſome—that tho' it be plainly declared, "The Lord deſpiſeth not his priſoners," Pſal. lxix. 33. that is, hath a reſpect to them, and will ſhew them favour; yet millions of his priſoners, created, preſerved, and redeemed by him, given into his hands, put in ſubjection to him, judged and ſhut up in priſon by him, while he keeps the key, and at length ſubdues them to himſelf; ſhall, notwithſtanding, be ſo deſpiſed by him, as long as he and they ſhall exiſt, that he will not bring ſo much as one of them out of the priſon-houſe, or own the leaſt relation to them; and that Chriſt ſhall never ſo ſave to the uttermoſt, as to ſave one ſingle ſinner from the greateſt of all miſeries, the miſery of the ſecond death.

If the common doctrine be true, then two infinite principles, diametrically oppoſite to each other, infinite good and infinite evil; infinite holineſs and happineſs, and infinite ſin, guilt, and miſery, ſhall exiſt in the univerſe for ever; the latter ſtill increaſing without end. Is not this too like the Manichean doctrine of two eternal and almighty principles, in perpetual oppoſition, but one never prevailing to the deſtruction of the other, their power being ſo exactly poiſed? This groſs error took its riſe from the apparent abſurdity of the common doctrine, that maintains the eternal exiſtence and ſway of moral and penal evil, under the adminiſtration of one and the ſame almighty and beneficent Being, whoſe eſſential characteriſtic is love; yet ſeems more conſiſtent with itſelf than that doctrine, which, under the cover of doing honour to his juſtice, wounds his paternal character, and the moſt eſſential perfections of his nature. But God is and ſhall be good to all, and muſt be ſo, while his tender mercies are over all his works, Pſal. cxlv. 9.

That paſſage in the 89th Pſalm, "If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes," &c. ver. 30, 31, may be viewed, I ſhould humbly think, as containing a promiſe that extends to all mankind, but eſpecially to the elect. Are they not all Chriſt's children, as he is their Creator and Preſerver? and hath not he, as man, and they, one common Father? for the ſame God formed them in the womb. Are they not given into his hands—given to him by his Father, in his extenſive appointment of him to be *heir of the world, and heir of all things?* Does he not call them *brethren*, ſaying, "I will declare thy name unto *my brethren?*" Pſal. xxii. 22. In this very ſenſe the words of the prophet ſtrictly apply, "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" Mal. ii. 10. Why ſhould any then deal treacherouſly, as it follows, againſt his brother, by profaning the covenant of his fathers—the Abrahamic covenant, which extends to all mankind? Why ſhould they deny their brethren, the children of the ſame Father, any intereſt in that Father's correcting love, and convert it into relentleſs and vindictive wrath, that ſhall be for ever crying to them, Give, give, but never be ſatisfied? Is this giving him honour as their and our Father, and ſhewing them love as our brethren?

God hath made of one blood all the nations that dwell upon the face of the earth; and the Pſalmiſt tells us, that he faſhioneth the hearts of all the inhabitants of the earth alike, Pſal. xxxiii. 14, 15. Many contend, that all mankind are condemned, by Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion, to the penalty of eternal death, and conſequently all who die in infancy, the few elect infants excepted, muſt inevitably and eternally periſh. Thus all mankind are under a ſentence of condemnation, by which they are ſubjected to eternal miſery, independent of any actual tranſgreſſion. But the word of God aſcribes the condemnation of ſinners, to whom the word of ſalvation is ſent, to the rejection of the goſpel; "He that believeth not is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.—And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil," John iii. 18, 19.

Wicked and impenitent men are in ſcripture called baſtards, or illegitimate children, which imports, however, their relation to God as Creator: "But if ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards, and not ſons," Heb. xii. 8. They are repreſented as the children of the bond woman, of Hagar, or a ſlave that became a ſecondary wife or concubine, whoſe children, by the law of Moſes, could not inherit landed property. Such are we all by nature; but ſuch are legitimated under the goſpel, by believing on the Son of God, the elder brother, who procured the right of adoption. Though natural children cannot inherit, unleſs legitimated, and no father will leave his eſtate to them, provided he have a lawful heir; yet, acting in character, he will leave them ſome portion, according to his rank and wealth, ſuch ſhare of his ſubſtance as ſeemeth him good. Is God the only Father, then, poſſeſſed of riches and affection, that will leave no portion whatever to the illegitimate children of his great family, except what they get in paſſing through this life, in

which he is often very liberal to the moſt undutiful among them? Does his calling them baſtards, or ſons of the bond woman, intimate that he has nothing in reſerve for them but miſery? that the puniſhment which he threatens to inflict upon them hereafter is to be wholly vindictive, without the leaſt grain of corrective kindneſs? Would an earthly father be afraid of forfeiting his character, if he treated his natural ſon ſo, though no parental affection prompted to a different conduct? and would men reproach him with it as cruelty? Surely God is not the only pitiful and tender-hearted father in the univerſe, that will act without mercy towards his illegitimate offspring, who decline the education and regimen of his houſehold, or the ſons of the bond woman, if they once paſs that bourne whence no traveller returns. Is there no difficulty in all this on the common ſyſtem?

In the caſe of Iſhmael we may find an illuſtration. Though he could not inherit the privilege reſerved for Iſaac, yet God did not deny him his bleſſing. His father never underſtood the election of the ſon of the free woman as an excluſion of the other from all hope, elſe how could he pray for him in faith? "And Abraham ſaid unto God, O that Iſhmael might live before thee!" To which the Lord replied, "And as for Iſhmael, I have heard thee; behold, I have bleſſed him," Gen. xvii. 18, 20. Thoſe who heſitate not to doom Iſhmael to the bottomleſs pit, ſhould firſt prove that his father had no other life in his eye, in praying for him, than the preſent, and God no other in granting his requeſt. As Jacob was an eminent type of the Meſſiah, eſpecially in his powerful interceſſion with the Angel of the Covenant, the night before he met his enraged brother Eſau, I am inclined to think, that God ſo far granted his requeſts that night, as to make his brother a thorough convert at the next day's joyful interview. When Chriſt, like Jacob, comes forth in the goſpel, to meet the poor ſinners for whom he has been interceding on high, and ſhews them his face, though fortified againſt him, as with four hundred armed men, yet are they made ſweetly to yield to his all-conquering grace. This gives far more joy to our true Jacob, who, as a prince, has power with God, and prevails for the bleſſing, than the deſtruction of the greateſt of his enemies. Bleſſed be the God of Iſrael, who only doth ſuch wondrous things, Pſal. lxxii. 18. But though Eſau, by his unbelief, loſt the birth-right, and with it the bleſſing of the firſt-born; yet his father pronounced an inferior bleſſing upon him; for, "by faith, Iſaac bleſſed Jacob *and Eſau* concerning things to come." Was not this typical? Hath our heavenly Father no bleſſings to beſtow upon his profane Eſaus, though of an inferior nature to that which the heirs of promiſe ſhall inherit?

Our Lord ſays, "And I, if I be lifted up," or, "when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw *all men* unto me," John xii. 32. Will not ſuch, in due time, be the conſtraining influence of his death upon all human hearts? No, ſays the common doctrine, and its abettors, no ſuch thing; for, ſo far from drawing *all men* unto him, not one perhaps in ten thouſand, take mankind in groſs, ſhall experience the attractive power of his death. Does he himſelf ſay ſo?

John, ſpeaking of him as the Creator of all things, tells us, "in him was life, and the life was the light of *men*." He excepts none, and therefore adds the end of the Baptiſt's teſtimony of him in that character of light, "that *all men* through him might believe: And farther he obſerves, that "he was the true light which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world," John i. 4, 7, 9. Our Lord teſtifies of himſelf. "I am the light of the *world*:" and God the Father promiſed him to his ancient people under the expreſſive figure of "the ſun of righteouſneſs." Was the light of the natural ſun ever confined to any age, country, or individual? Is it not intended for the benefit of all? Are we then juſtified in for ever confining the light of the ſun of righteouſneſs to a choſen few, and ſo ſinking his divine influence unſpeakably beneath that of the image employed to repreſent it?

In the 19th Pſalm, the ſun is ſpoken of under the beautiful figure of a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and a ſtrong man rejoicing to run a race. In his going forth from the end of heaven, and circuit to the ends of it, we are told that there is *nothing hid* from the heat thereof. We know whoſe perſon, glory, and work, all this is intended to repreſent. Do the beams of the ſun pervade and operate at the bottom of the ocean, and the centre of the mountains, ſo that there is nothing hid from his powerful influence, within the extenſive range of his operation? Do his rays in theſe deep receſſes prepare the pearl, the coral, and the diamond, with many other precious things? and is there a region in the univerſe, filled with wretched inhabitants, where the light of the true Sun ſhall never ſhine—where his all quickening beams ſhall never produce any ſuch correſponding effects? Will he never fill up the import of the type or figure ſo often employed in ſcripture to repreſent him? The abettors of the received ſyſtem tell us, No; that all his quickening and ſaving beams are to be for ever confined to the elect, that highly favoured few.

Joſeph is allowed to have been an eminent type of Jeſus. In his public adminiſtration in Egypt he ſaved from periſhing by the famine, not only his brethren of his Father's houſe, that were figurative of the elect; but alſo all the Egyptians, who repreſented the reſt of mankind, ſo that they hailed him as their common deliverer. The whole land became Pharaoh's property by Joſeph's management, and all the people his voluntary ſervants; what Chriſt the antitype will alſo accompliſh, before he delivers up his kingdom to his Father. But the common doctrine obſcures, curtails, and maims this glorious figure, by confining the effects of our Lord's mediation to his brethren of his Father's houſe, the church of the firſt-born, and making the ſubjection of all the reſt of men to him to be forced and feigned. In Joſeph we have one of the fulleſt figures of the nature and extent of our Lord's mediation that the whole Bible affords; and what before appeared dubious or culpable in his conduct, the reducing every thing in Egypt under the abſolute power of Pharaoh, is ſeen to be replete with meaning, and fraught with love.

In Joſeph's brethren we have, as in figure, the unbelieving part of mankind at large, as well as of the Jewiſh nation, and in Benjamin of the elect, who, compared to the reſt, are but few. Joſeph ſtood in the relation only of a *brother by the father's ſide* to the reſt, the very relation in which Chriſt ſtands to

all men; but Benjamin was his mother's ſon alſo. In the ſuperior love and attention ſhewed him, and in the more liberal preſents given him, we have prefigured the peculiar privileges of the elect church, or the firſt-born children, the ſons and heirs of the Jeruſalem from above, that is the mother of all that now love and obey the Lord Jeſus.—In the pains taken by Joſeph to reach conviction to his other brethren, and bring them to repentance, we have a pledge and earneſt of what he will do to recover thoſe who leave this life related to him as brethren by creation only; and will he not be as ſucceſsful as his illuſtrious type? will he never have the honour and the happineſs to recover any but his dear Benjamins, who ſtand related to him as younger brethren, the children of God's handmaid the church? We may reſt aſſured, that in all things, and in this alſo, he will always retain the pre-eminence. How glorious ſhall our kind brother Joſeph, the great vice-roy of the univerſe, appear in the eyes of all redeemed intelligences, when he ſhall finiſh his great work, and preſent them all complete in holineſs and bliſs before his Father, who may be ſuppoſed to addreſs him, Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord—Behold my ſervant, whom I have upheld; mine elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth!

Many will not receive theſe things, who muſt therefore remain ſtrangers to the joy the belief and contemplation of them are calculated to afford. The very ſame truths that excite contradiction and blaſphemy in ſome, even great profeſſors, fill others, when properly underſtood, and duly believed, with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. "But when the Jews ſaw the multitude, they were filled with envy, and ſpake againſt thoſe things that were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming," Acts xiii. 45.

Was not Solomon another remarkable type of Chriſt? He is ſaid to have exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wiſdom; and that *all* the earth ſought to him, to hear his wiſdom which God had put in his heart," 1 Kings x. 23, 24. We are told that "all the kings of the earth ſought the preſence of Solomon, to hear his wiſdom, that God had put in his heart;" and that they brought him every man his preſent, &c. a rate year by year, 2 Chron. ix. 23, 24. This was not the effect of compulſion, but choice; and in the perſons of their kings, all the people of the then known earth did homage, and paid tribute to Solomon. That the reality of this pertains to Chriſt, appears from the 72d Pſalm, and from the 138th, 4th and 5th verſes. It deſerves remark, that Solomon employed the Gentiles in his works as bond men, but the Iſraelites as honourable ſervants, 1 Kings ix. 21, 22. Here we have in figure the diſtinction between thoſe whom Chriſt makes kings and prieſts to his Father, and the reſt of mankind; yet both ſhall be employed in perfecting his ſpiritual temple, in the glorious age of peace and reſt, though in a different capacity. What mangled work does the common ſyſtem make of all this! Though all the kings and nations of the then known earth voluntarily ſerved Solomon, during his peaceful reign of forty years, which was a figure of the millennial, but eſpecially of the New Jeruſalem reſt; yet how few will conſent to allow the

ſame honour to Chriſt, the true Solomon, the King of *Salem!* He ſhall never, according to the bulk of Chriſtians, receive ſuch univerſal and voluntary homage, let the ſcriptures ſay what they will to the contrary.

In his prayer at the dedication of the temple, Solomon prayed not only for the Jews, in their diverſified ſituations, and for thoſe that ſhould become proſelytes to their religion, but alſo for all mankind—"Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the ſtranger calleth to thee for; that *all people of the earth* may know thy name to fear thee, as do thy people Iſrael;—that *all the people of the earth* may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none elſe," 1 Kings viii. 43, 60. This part of the prayer, of which the Jews in our Lord's day had no idea, will be fully anſwered, when our true Solomon ſhall finiſh and dedicate the temple of mercy, to which there is little yet done, compared to what ſhall be done hereafter, when the ſcattered materials are collected, and built up into an holy temple in the Lord.

The ſeraphims ſing, "The whole earth is full of his glory," or, reading it in the future, "ſhall be full of his glory," Iſa. vi. 3.; or, as the margin reads it, "his glory is, or ſhall be, the fulneſs of the whole earth." It is a queſtion if this take place till Chriſt appear in his glory, to bleſs and repleniſh the new earth. Then, and then only, the will of God ſhall be done on earth as it is done in heaven, Math. vi. 10.

Many, finding an election of grace aſſerted in ſcripture, that ſome are choſen to ſalvation, thro' ſanctification of the ſpirit and belief of the truth here on earth, raſhly conclude that the reſt of mankind muſt eternally periſh, ſeeing no medium between the two, tho' there really be an important one. When we attend to the various elections mentioned in ſcripture, we find, that tho' theſe imported ſome ſpecial privileges to the elected, that theſe were intended for the behoof of others, and not their excluſion from favour. Such was the choice of the firſt-born of the ſeed of Abraham—of the tribe of Levi—of the family of Aaron—of David and Solomon to be kings over Iſrael—of Chriſt himſelf, to be head over *all things* to his church; and of church officers and paſtors, for the edification of his myſtical body. There is an analogy or agreement obſervable in all God's works. Is the election of the church of the firſt-born, then, the only election that, inſtead of being intended for the good of others, imports their total and final excluſion from mercy, according to the popular doctrine? God is always conſiſtent with himſelf; but the ſyſtems of men are often at variance with him, ſpeaking in his word, with common ſenſe, and with the honour and happineſs of the human race. My ſoul, be not farther entangled with their ſecrets; mine honour, be not thou united with them!

We are told, in general terms, that to the Lord belongs the iſſues from death, Pſal. lxviii. 20. the ſecond death not excepted; but the doctrine of perpetual ſin and miſery replies, No ſuch thing; for that there is a death from which he will never grant any iſſues or releaſe—that this, indeed, belongs not to him, having put it out of his power by his own word. Were that really the caſe, would it not be ſtrange that he ſhould, in that very word, claim, in the *moſt unequivocal* terms, iſſues from death as his indiſputable right?—Here again,

the common doctrine appears to ſet the word of truth at variance, or put aſunder what God has joined together.

Does the Lord not deſpiſe his priſoners? Does he looſe his priſoners; bring out thoſe that are bound with chains—ſatisfying, and filling with his goodneſs, ſuch as ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; becauſe they rebelled againſt the word of God, and contemned the counſels of the Moſt High; bringing them out of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, and breaking their bands aſunder? Does he break the gates of braſs, and cut the bars of iron in ſunder, and ſend his word, and heal them, delivering them from their deſtructions? Pſal. cvii. And ſhall theſe things be never realized in behalf of thoſe to whom they chiefly apply? Is Meſſiah anointed, not only to proclaim liberty to captives, but alſo "the opening of the priſon to them that are bound; to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, them that ſit in darkneſs from the priſon-houſe?" Iſa. lxi. 1.—xlii. 7. Are his priſoners to be ſent forth by the blood of his covenant, out of the pit wherein is no water? Zech. ix. 11. And will he ſay to the priſoners, "Go forth; to them that are in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves?" Iſa. xlix. 9. Does he always keep the key of their priſon, opening while none can ſhut, and ſhutting while none can open? and is all this to be confined to the preſent ſtate, though no language can more emphatically deſcribe the miſery of a future world, and deliverance from it before his mediatory reign expire?

Is hell a pit in which there is no water? Are the priſoners there his priſoners, by right of creation, preſervation, purchaſe; alſo by right of dominion over them, delivery of them into his hands, confinement and puniſhment? By what law then are they excluded from any benefit in ſuch declarations of the word of truth as apply directly to their caſe? Is ſuch a work too great for him to accompliſh; or would the accompliſhment of it not redound to his glory? The extenſion of the import of ſuch paſſages by no means exclude the ſenſe commonly attached to them, but only fill it up. The variety of expreſſion employed to deſcribe our Lord's mediatory work, ſeems plainly to require this; and it is only filling up the great outlines of his paternal character, which the common ſyſtem obſcures and maims. He is called the *everlaſting Father*, or, as it might be ſtrictly rendered, the *Father of the age*; for it is one of his mediatory titles, and connected with ſuch, and ſhall be maintained and diſplayed during the whole age or ages over which he preſides as Meſſiah, Iſa. ix. 6.

Does the Lord turn man into deſtruction, and ſay, "Return ye children of men?" Pſal xc. 3. Does deſtruction in ſcripture often denote the ſecond death, and ſhall the Lord never ſay to thoſe unhappy beings who lie under its deſtruction, "Return ye children of men?"

Is he ſaid to look down from heaven to hear the groanings of the priſoner, to looſe thoſe that are appointed to death, or, as the margin renders it, and the original has it, *to looſe the children of death?* Pſal. cii. 19, 20. and ſhall the children of death, notwithſtanding, for ever remain in captivity and chains; tho' he is ſaid elſewhere, not to deſpiſe, that is, to regard the priſoners, to commiſerate their caſe in their grievous bondage?

The church prays in the 83d Pſalm, that her enemies may be made like Midianites, &c. whoſe bodies became as dung for the earth, and that God would, in the next world, cloſely purſue them with his tempeſt, and terrify them with his ſtorm, or threatens that this would be the caſe, aſſigns the reaſon, "Fill their faces with ſhame, that they may ſeek thy name, O Lord." Reading the laſt verſe without the ſupplement, "That they may know that thou, whoſe name alone is Jehovah, art the Moſt High over all the earth." Will this prayer not be anſwered? And anſwered it cannot be, if there be no deliverance from the miſery of a future ſtate.

Paul ſpeaks of the working whereby Chriſt is able even to ſubdue *all things* unto himſelf, as to be exemplified in pattern in the future glorification of the bodies of the ſaints, Phil. iii. 21. What he is here ſaid to be able to do, we are taught elſewhere to believe he will actually perform; and the ſame apoſtle wrote both paſſages, and did not forget what he wrote, ſo as to contradict himſelf. "All things ſhall be ſubdued unto him; for he muſt reign till he has put all enemies under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 28, 25. The footſtool of Chriſt is mercy; for in the temple he ſat in the Shechinah, the ſymbol of his preſence, between the cherubims, and over the mercy-ſeat, the propitiatory, or golden cover of the ark, which contained the tables of the law. To put enemies under his feet, then, is ſo to puniſh them, as to bring them under the impenetrable ſhield or covering of mercy, where the thunders of a violated law are ſilenced, and the flames of mount Sinai extinguiſhed. Thus, as James ſpeaks, mercy rejoices againſt, or over judgment.

Has Chriſt ſaid that he ſhall bring all his enemies to his feet at length, or the Father promiſed to make them his footſtool; and ſhall he not do it? Hath he ſpoken it, and ſhall he not bring it to paſs? Does ſubduing them *to himſelf* intend no more than that conqueſt of his vengeance, to which the abettors of the common ſyſtem would confine it? Will it not include loyal, willing ſubjection, ſuch as that which the kings of the earth gave to Solomon his type? for they ſought to him from the fame of his wiſdom, and paid him voluntary tribute, even thoſe who had been at war with his father. And was this more perfectly fulfilled in the type than ever it ſhall be in the antitype? Pſal. 66th, already referred to, ver 3. holds forth the ſame truth. "Say unto God, how terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatneſs of thy power ſhall thine enemies ſubmit *themſelves* unto thee." Here they are ſaid to ſubmit themſelves to Meſſiah, which ſeems plainly to intimate voluntary ſubjection. Above we are taught to believe, that it will be in conſequence of his ſubduing them to himſelf; and he is a rock whoſe work is perfect. No enemies are here excepted; all enemies are elſewhere expreſsly mentioned; and we have no right to except any.—Will not the grand purpoſe of the manifeſtation of the Son of God in human nature be yet anſwered—the deſtruction of the works of the devil? 1 John iii 8. While ſin and miſery exiſt in the univerſe, the works of the devil are not deſtroyed; but the purpoſe of Chriſt's death ſhall be finally accompliſhed.

But I muſt conclude, reſerving the farther proſecution of the ſubject to another opportunity. May it be our daily cordial requeſt for ourſelves and all

Chriſtians, that we may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's will, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding; that we may all walk worthy of him unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God, Col. i. 9, 10. Wiſhing you much ſucceſs in all your efforts to promote genuine Chriſtianity, I am,

Dear Sir,

Your cordial friend and fellow-ſervant, &c.

LETTER VII.

Then came to Jeſus Scribes and Phariſees, ſaying, Why do thy diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders? He anſwered, Why do ye alſo tranſgreſs the commandment of God by your tradition? Ye hypocrites, well did Eſaias propheſy of you, ſaying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. The Phariſees were offended after they heard this, Mat. xv. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12.

Dear Sir,

IT would appear that Paul was branded as an enemy, by ſome in the Coloſſian church, on account of the doctrine which he taught among them: "Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth?" To be reputed ſuch was, no doubt, often the reward of his fidelity from men, and of that of his fellow-apoſtles. It will alſo be more or leſs the reward of all who obtain mercy to ſerve God with their ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son. But why ſhould a perſon be thought an enemy to God, or to his fellow-men, becauſe he declares what appears to him, upon due examination, and earneſt prayer to God, to be his truth, though he cannot pretend to be infallible in his judgment? Let him ſpeak as to wiſe men, leaving them to judge what he ſaith, by the verdict of divine truth, which ſhall judge all its hearers at laſt. "He that hath my word, let him ſpeak my word faithfully: what is chaff to the wheat? ſaith the Lord," Jer. xxiii. 28. How ſhall men judge whether it be the word of God, if nothing muſt be ſpoken or heard as ſuch, but what human wiſdom has already diſcovered, and been pleaſed to ſanction. It is the right and duty of every ſervant of Chriſt to declare freely and faithfully whatever they learn from his word, and let none pretend his authority in forbidding them. The ſuppreſſion of this right, inherent in every meſſenger of peace, by whatever mean, is a device of Satan, to counteract the ſpread of divine knowledge; and he never carries his point ſo effectually, as when he can influence perſons of reputation, for piety and ſoundneſs in the faith, to abet his cauſe. Thus he transforms himſelf into an angel of light.

I have of late been often ſurpriſed to find, not only the pious hoſtile to the doctrine of the reſtoration, but alſo many who have yet no reaſon to hope, that they ſhall eſcape the wrath to come! Can the former wiſh the eternal exiſtence of Satan's empire? Are the latter ſo well pleaſed with their preſent maſter and

his ſervice, that they are afraid a ſeparation ſhould ever take place? It is truly ſurpriſing, to ſee ſome zealouſly pleading for the eternity of future puniſhment, who manifeſt, by their words and deeds, that they believe no ſuch doctrine. Some public teachers conjure the reſtoration into a bugbear, with which they alarm poor ignorant people, who are left to periſh for lack of knowledge. But did you hear them ſometimes exhort their audience, you would think them univerſaliſts *. How far this is conſiſtent with their profeſſed creed, let the world judge.

It is ſafe following the ſacred writers; for their language is not calculated to miſlead, as theirs is who attempt to bring the word of God to ſpeak the language, and ſupport the tenets of a ſyſtem. Paul had every advantage of education, to which unerring inſpiration was added. He tells us, that "at, or in the name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue ſhall confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii. 10, 11. Are not theſe terms general enough to comprehend an univerſe of beings? Elſewhere he tells us, "That no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt," 1 Cor. xii. 3. He certainly knew the import of ſuch language; and we are juſtified in making him his own interpreter rather than fallible men.

In the epiſtle to the Romans, xiv. chap. 11. ver. the ſame paſſage is alſo quoted from the prophet Iſaiah xlv. 23. and referred to the laſt judgment as a check to raſh cenſure. "But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God," ver. 10, 12. But in the epiſtle to the Philippians, Paul appears to have in his eye ſuch a bowing of *every knee* in the name of Jeſus, and ſuch a confeſſing of him to be Lord, as ſhall be to the glory of God the Father, when all the ends of the earth ſhall look unto him and be ſaved, as expreſſed by the prophet. It may be fulfilled in both ſenſes, though at different periods. If every knee ſhall bow in homage to the Son of God, and if every tongue ſhall confeſs, by the Holy Ghoſt, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, how ſhall it be proved, from the word of truth, that unknown millions of knees ſhall never bow in loyal homage at or in his name, and that as many tongues ſhall never confeſs, by the Spirit, or in a gracious manner, that he is Lord to the glory of the Father? When with the heart man believes unto righteouſneſs, with the mouth ſuch con-

* Men ſometimes advance truths that far exceed the bounds of their own ſyſtems. A well known author, ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſays, "His compaſſion is as unbounded as his power." Is it ſo, if it does not extend to one in many thouſands of his miſerable creatures? This author has ſome juſt reflections on the paſſage prefixed to this letter.—"The contemners of God's law are ordinarily mad with zeal for the traditions and ceremonies of men—a certain mark of deteſtable hypocriſy! All human inventions in religion invade the authority, and pollute the worſhip of God; and miſlead the hearts, and corrupt the practices of men. May God root them out of his church, and out of our hearts, that we ourſelves may not, on their account, be excluded from his kingdom! None are farther from the light of God's truth, than implicit votaries of miniſters, and eſpecially preachers who are puffed up with a conceit of their own wiſdom. How dull, how ſlow of heart to conceive the things of practical religion, are even real ſaints!" What applies to inventions in worſhip, holds alſo of errors in doctrine; and indeed there was no leproſy more dangerous and incurable than that in the head. It is not eaſy to ſtoop ſo low as to *own that we have been* wrong, and are willing to retrace our path.

ſeſſion is made unto ſalvation. Do we uſe no undue liberty with ſcripture, when we make a few ambiguous terms and phraſes, moſt of which are indeed made ſo only in our tranſlation, an axe to hew down ſo many of the trees of Paradiſe, with all their precious fruit? Cuſtom and prejudice will reconcile the mind to any thing, and fortify it againſt the plaineſt truths, and the moſt obnoxious concluſions.

In looking over the following paragraph, I find I have already partly anticipated it. But as the ſentiment is ſomewhat diverſified and enlarged, to ſave myſelf the trouble of writing the whole over again, I permit it to remain as it ſtands. Similar thoughts may occaſionally recur; but ſomething of this nature is to be often met with in ſcripture, and an apoſtle, who was at no loſs to diverſify both ſentiment and language, yet ſaid, "Brethren, to write the ſame things to you, to me indeed it is not grievous, but for you it is ſafe," Phil. iii. 1.

That apoſtle reaſons, "If, *or ſince*, the firſt-fruit is holy, the lump is alſo holy: and if, *or ſince*, the root is holy, ſo are the branches, Rom. xi. 16. Meſſiah, the ſecond Adam, is the creating, preſerving, and redeeming root of mankind, and they are the branches; for all things are of, from, or out of him, and he is the firſt-fruit of his elect, as they are of the reſt of God's creatures. Now ſince he, as the firſt-fruit, and the root, and his people in him, as the firſt-fruit of the reſt of creation, or of the creatures, are holy, and ſet apart for God, have we his authority, ſpeaking by Paul, for giving the far greater part of the branches, and of the lump or maſs, to Satan, to be his undiſputed prey and portion world without end? Where the Lord makes no exception or limitation, and has pointed out the extent of his truth by ſuch plain ſimilies, have we any right to make an exception, or to abridge and confine the obvious latitude of ſuch expreſſive figures? Mankind may feel little ſcruple in giving one another to the devil, as his perpetual prey, becauſe there is little of brotherly attachment among them; nay, they may find ſome of the very worſt paſſions of the human heart gratified by ſuch conduct, pride, ſelf-conceit, reſentment, and contempt of others. But let them not preſume to meaſure their Maker by themſelves, as if he approved of ſuch conduct, or would act in conformity to ſuch infernal principles. Parents of a religious profeſſion have been found wicked enough to ſacrifice ſome of their helpleſs children to Moloch, and ignorant enough to think this would promote the intereſt of the reſt. Men would do ſo ſtill with regard to their brethren, and that from ſimilar reaſons; but let them not think that God ſo treats any of his children, or approves of their ſo doing. He had need to be wiſe indeed, who comes after ſuch a king to correct, amend, and qualify his language, and preſcribe the mode of his procedure.

Was God's theocracy, or divine polity over the Jews an epitome, or outline of his government over the whole church, and, indeed, over the world at large; and ſhall the outline or rude draught be never filled up? An eminent expounder of ſcripture admits this, at leaſt ſo far, in his comment on Pſalm lxxviii. 2, 3. and the citation of them in Mat. xiii. 35. "Thus much at leaſt is evident from it, that the hiſtory of old Iſrael ſomewhat reſembles the letter of the goſpel-parables, and contains ſhadowed out under it, the hiſtory of a correſponden-

ſtate of things in the new Iſrael, or church-chriſtian." Dr. Horne on the book of Pſalms.

The Chriſtian church has never yet preſented a ſtate of things correſpondent to the jubilee; and we have no reaſon from ſcripture, that I can find, to expect a full realizement of that glorious ſhadow of good things to come before the day of judgment. All debts were remitted—all forfeited or mortgaged inheritances reſtored—all priſoners releaſed—and all ſlaves, whether natives or foreigners, were ſet at liberty, and received ſome little gratuity from their maſter. All this however was but the ſhadow of good things to come; but the body or reality is of Chriſt, and ſhall be realized by him in its ſeaſon. May we not then adopt the remarks of a pious commentator, in his reflections upon Iſaiah 42d. "Infinite is the excellency of Jeſus Chriſt! How glorious the nature and end of his mediation! What ground of gladneſs is this to ſinners, the wildeſt Arabs and moſt diſtant iſlanders not excepted!"

It may be granted, that the prayers and exhortations of ſcripture are equivalent to predictions; that the church, inſpired by the Spirit, never prayed for what ſhall not be accompliſhed, and that God never exhorts to what he ſhall not realize. "Ariſe, O God, judge the earth: for thou ſhall inherit all nations," Pſal. lxxxii. 8. "Make a joyful noiſe unto the Lord, all ye lands," or *all the earth*, Pſal c. 1. The original here, as alſo in Pſal. lxvi. 1. and elſe where in the book of Pſalms, denotes, to *keep a jubilee*, and the whole earth, or all mankind, are concerned in this jubilee. We know what the nature of the ancient jubilee was, yet was it confined to the Jews, and but a ſhadow of this, which ſhall extend to all nations. They are exhorted to obſerve it with the pureſt and moſt elevated joy; and will not the Lord give them abundant cauſe to celebrate it in ſuch a manner! Let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen, and Amen,i' Pſal. lxxii. 19.

Above we are told, that God ſhall inherit *all nations*; elſewhere, that Chriſt is appointed heir of *all things*; but how to reconcile his heiring all things, and inheriting all nations which includes poſſeſſion, with the great uſurper's retaining power over the far greater part of them to all eternity, I am quite at a loſs to ſay; for there is nothing more evident, than that, upon the common doctrine, Meſſiah cannot heir all things, and inherit all nations. Will there be any intercommunity of poſſeſſions between Chriſt and Satan; or will our Lord act like the Jews, who never conquered the whole of the teritory given in promiſe to their fathers; but ſuffered the doomed Canaanites to retain poſſeſſion of much of it, or retake part? This was their ſin, by which the type failed in its appointed extent, and the failure entailed its own puniſhment; but no ſuch thing can take place with regard to Chriſt's appointed and promiſed inheritance. He will not ſuffer the Canaanites always to poſſeſs any part of his land.

In Pſalm cxlviii. "Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth, both young men and maidens, old men and children," are exhorted to praiſe the name of the Lord, whoſe name alone is excellent, and his glory above the earth and heaven, ver. 11, 12, 13. Does not this include all men? Will not the Lord's words by the prophet, then, never apply to them, "*This people have I formed* for myſelf; they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe," as

above exhorted? Iſa? xliii. 21. The book of Pſalms concludes with a more extenſive call ſtill; "Let every thing that hath breath praiſe the Lord," which might be rendered in the future, "Every thing that hath breath ſhall praiſe the Lord." Agreeable to this, the Pſalmiſt ſays, "All thy works ſhall praiſe thee, O Lord, and thy ſaints ſhall bleſs thee," Pſal. cxlv. 10. John ſaw and heard all this realized: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," Rev. xiii. Theſe are diſtinguiſhed from the ſaints, whom Chriſt hath redeemed to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made to their God *kings* and *prieſts*, and who ſhall reign with himſelf on the earth; things mentioned in the 9th and 10th verſes, as peculiar to them. They are ſaid to have ſung a new ſong, of which this is the burden. In the chorus the angels join, "ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing." Here, beſides angels and ſaints, an univerſe of beings joining in a ſong of praiſe to God and the Lamb. But how all God's intelligent works can praiſe him, in one cordial harmonious ſong, while his ſaints bleſs him, if all, but theſe are to lie for ever under his wrath and curſe, will be hard to ſhew. What Hezekiah ſaid in his own caſe, with regard to natural death and the grave, applies with ſtill greater force to the ſecond death and its priſon: "For the grave cannot praiſe thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee," Iſa. xxviii. 18, 19.

Here we are taught to believe, that the living alone can praiſe God; and are therefore conſtrained to conclude, that all the creatures whom John ſaw and heard praiſing God, as diſtinguiſhed from ſaints and angels, are made alive to him, and conſequently, that they cannot mean beings under the power of the ſecond death, whoſe praiſe is paſſive, extorted by puniſhment, and not the cordial ſong of holy and happy beings. This paſſage, of itſelf, is ſufficient to determine the controverſy, were men diſpoſed to receive divine truth, upon the authority of him that reveals it; for no concluſion can be more juſt and obvious, than that univerſal praiſe is a token and proof of univerſal happineſs and joy. Were any thing farther neceſſary to confirm this, it is this, "The Lord ſhall rejoice in his works," Pſal. civ. 31. even *in all his works together*, as the metrical verſion expreſſes it. Here there is an evident alluſion to his ſurvey of creation, when he pronounced all his works *very good*, even theſe ſpirits that afterwards became devils. Will God ſo rejoice in theſe his works that remain very bad, polluted with ſin, and tormented with the curſed. So the ſupporters of the common doctrine maintain; becauſe, ſay they, he derives glory from their torment; but at the expence of truth; for he declares that he has no pleaſure in their death, and that he has created all things for his own pleaſure.

The ſtate of future miſery is called, in the New Jeruſalem, a great furnace of *fire*. Do men caſt metal into a furnace that it may be melted and refined, and

ſo moulded and framed for ſome uſeful purpoſe? Is the greateſt of all furnaces then the only one ever kindled, that ſhall anſwer no ſuch valuable end? Does God pay ſo much attention to it, as to kindle and blow up its flames with his own breath? Will millions of veſſels of wrath be caſt into it, more valuable in themſelves, as his creatures, than the precious gold of Ophir, and yet not one ever recovered thence fitted for the Maſter's uſe? This is not God's uſual mode of procedure; and the miſery of the lake of fire is repreſented as inflicted in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb, which ſeems plainly to intimate, that the caſe of the ſubjects of future puniſhment ſhall not be hopeleſs.

Is it agreeable to reaſon and common ſenſe, that the man who ſows but a ſmall quantity, ſhould be as long in reaping the produce as he who ſows an hundred fold? This muſt however be the caſe, if the duration of future miſery be eternal. Every one muſt reap, in his own perſon, what he has ſown. Our Lord plainly ſpeaks of ſome being beaten with many ſtripes, and others with few; but how ſtripes repeated to all eternity can be few, is a myſtery indeed; for if extended, in their infliction, throughout one and the ſame endleſs duration, all compariſon ſeems loſt.

If no gracious change paſs on any beyond the grave, idiots, and thoſe that die in infancy, muſt periſh. There is no ſerving or enjoying an object unknown; for, without knowledge, the mind is not good, is not ſanctified, ſeeing faith cometh by hearing the word of God, and without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him, or to poſſeſs that holineſs without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

In the courſe of reading the prophetic writings, I have been often ſtruck with ſurpriſe, to find the moſt gracious promiſes not ſeldom made to a moſt wicked people, who had been previouſly threatened with the moſt ſevere judgments, ſome of which ſeem to import a premature death, and ſubſequent miſery. Though both are addreſſed to the ſame people, yet they cannot be realized in them to that extent, but upon the ſcheme of the reſtoration. The converſion of wicked Manaſſeh, who enjoyed the benefit of a religious education, yet did more to provoke God than thouſands that periſh put together have done, is a ſtanding proof and monument of that truth, that where ſin abounded, grace ſhall much more abound. In ſuch inſtances the Lord teaches men, if they would be taught, not to limit the Holy One of Iſrael, who is not bound to act by the will of mortals.

In the 9th pſalm, 17th verſe, we are told, "The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and *all the nations* that forget God." How to reconcile this threatening with the promiſe and the oath made to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and ſo often referred to in ſcripture, I know not, except upon the univerſal ſcheme. That whole nations are ignorant of God, and forget him, is, alas! too evident; that ſuch ſhall be turned into hell is plainly aſſerted, and if they remain there for ever, how can they be bleſſed in Meſſiah, and call him bleſſed, even all the nations and families of the earth, as God's promiſe and oath declare they will? *and ſurely theſe cannot be* broken. The oath of God to Moſes, when the people

deſpiſed the land of promiſe, upon the uncandid report of the falſe ſpies, and procured for themſelves the ſentence of excluſion from it, is full to the ſame purpoſe. "And the Lord ſaid, But as truly as I live, all the earth ſhall be filled with the glory of the Lord," Num. xiv. 20, 21. Much remains to be done before this can take place, and it is a queſtion if ever it take place fully, till, as the Lord expreſſes it, "The new earth which I will make ſhall remain before me," compared to which, "the former ſhall not be remembered, nor come into mind," Iſa. lxvi. 22. lxv. 17. It appears that Hezekiah had the ſame liberal view of the Divine plan which that promiſe expreſſes, "Now therefore, O Lord our God, ſave us from his hand, that *all* the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord," Iſa. xxxvii. 20. In praying for deliverance from a cruel enemy, he has the good of the heathen at heart.

Though I intended, Dear Sir, when I began, to compriſe all that I meant to ſay, within ſmall compaſs; yet materials have ſo multiplied, that I muſt beg leave to trouble you farther on the ſubject. Permit me to conclude this letter, by adducing a few proofs of the undue liberty often taken with ſcripture language, by thoſe who think they are performing God eminent ſervice in ſo doing.

It is a practice too common, to eſcape the notice of an attentive obſerver, to make the pure oracles of the God of truth, by diverſe ingenious gloſſes, to ſpeak the language of ſome favourite ſyſtem. In conſequence of this management, a perſon who reads them without being prepoſſeſſed in favour of this or that ſcheme of doctrine, is ſure never to hit upon what is called the orthodox ſenſe of many paſſages, till he has previouſly got acquainted with ſome ſuch ſyſtem as his key. Would the Lord ſubject the proper underſtanding of his word to any ſuch human expedient, and make the faint beam of man neceſſary to perceive his own light? As well might we ſay that the orb and beams of the ſun can be ſeen only by the light of a taper.—Even our tranſlators of the Bible, however learned and pious they might be, have ſometimes had recourſe to this culpable conduct, by the ſupplements which they introduce into the text. From this they ſhould have kept at the utmoſt diſtance, as by it the voice of truth comes to be ſuppreſſed in certain caſes, or a quite different turn given to her report. An inſtance of this we have in Pſalm lxxxiii. already referred to. By inſerting *men* in the laſt verſe, they quite change the meaning of the original. "That *men* may know that thou, whoſe name alone is Jehovah, art the moſt high over all the earth." The perſons prayed or predicted againſt in the preceding verſe, are evidently thoſe intended in the laſt; but it did not ſuit their ſyſtematic creed to admit, that any ſhould be brought to ſeek God's face, and to know him to any ſaving purpoſe, who had been removed from this life in a ſtate of enmity to him. They alſo probably thought, that ſuch a rendering of the original, however juſt and literal, would give ſome countenance to the Popiſh doctrine of purgatory, which, by the bye, was only a corruption of a doctrine previouſly taught and profeſſed in the church, and a perverſion of it to the ſecular purpoſes of clerical influence and gain.

Some cannot bear the doctrine of the final reſtitution, as being ſo near of kin, in their opinion, *to the doctrine* of purgatory. This is entirely owing to their *not underſtanding the nature* of the reſtoration, which aſcribes all to

cy of Chriſt's death and interceſſion, and the ſaving knowledge of his word by the agency of the Spirit. In the 7th century, when the ſtate of Chriſtianity was, in many reſpects, groſsly corrupted, one of the general councils of the church, as they are called, condemned the doctrine of the reſtoration, which was then preached, and believed by many, forbidding any to preach and publiſh upon it, and commanding that all books upon the ſubject ſhould be deſtroyed. Then was introduced the doctrine of purgatory, which gradually grew into a fertile ſource of revenue to the Romiſh clergy, in whom was veſted the ſole power of bringing out of that middle ſtate of torment, by means of their prayers and maſſes. That doctrine does not pretend to deliver any out of hell itſelf, which it leaves in the ſame ſtate with the bulk of Proteſtants. It only aſſigns a purgatorial fire, in an intermediate ſtate, for the purgation of thoſe who have not committed, what they call *mortal ſins*, but have not had ſufficient merit to procure an immediate entrance into heaven. If they are not delivered thence, within a certain time, they are to be caſt into hell itſelf, where no prayers or maſſes can avail for their releaſe; but, previous to that, prayers, alms, and maſſes, are ſuppoſed to have a mighty influence in ſhortening the period of their purgation, and haſtening their deliverance and admiſſion to heaven.—Here the mediation of Chriſt, and the efficacy of his word and Spirit are overlooked, and the ſuppoſed acquired meetneſs for heaven, and deliverance from torment, aſcribed to what creatures can do, whence the Catholic clergy have acquired ſuch aſcendency; for no deliverance is expected out of purgatory, without their aid and interceſſion.

Who does not perceive a very material difference between this clerical figment, and the glorious doctrine of the reſtoration, which veſts the whole power in the hands of Chriſt, who performs the work without money and without price of any kind, and repreſents the delivered as having waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—The following extract, from the writings of a certain eminent author, is worth inſerting, as throwing ſome light on this ſubject.—'The doctrine of *purgatory*, as now taught by the *Papiſts*, ſeems 'to be a *corruption* of a *genuine doctrine*, held by the *ancient fathers*, concerning 'a *purifying fire*. It may, perhaps, be, that the *abſolute eternity* of puniſhment 'was not received, till after the introduction of metaphyſical ſubtleties, relating 'to *time, eternity*, &c. and the way of expreſſing theſe; that is, not till after 'the *pagan philoſophy*, and *vain deceit*, had mixed itſelf with, and corrupted 'a *Chriſtianity*.'—— Hartley's Obſervat. on Man, vol. ii. pag. 429.

May not the Pſalmiſt's prayer be underſtood in its full extent? "Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever, forſake not the works of thine hands." Pſalm cxxxviii. 8. Here a connection is eſtabliſhed between mercy, to the works of God; and ſhall the connection be never realized? The common doctrine makes God to forſake the works of his own hands to all eternity; but the church, in the lxxxiii. and the Pſalmiſt here, expreſſes very different ſentiments, and that in the prayer of faith.

Another inſtance we have in 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The laſt enemy *that* ſhall be deſtroyed *is* death." By inſerting the words *that* and *is*, which have none corresponding to them in the original, they quite evade the ſenſe of the paſſage, and ſo render it, that the death mentioned may be confined to the ſeparation of ſoul

and body as the laſt enemy the elect have to encounter. To them it is not an enemy; but admitting it were, it is not the laſt, the grave follows it. Such a rendering makes it poſſible, that thouſands of enemies may exiſt after the deſtruction of death; it not ſuiting the views of the tranſlators to make it the laſt enemy, but only the laſt enemy that ſhould be deſtroyed. There is no ſuch ambiguity, however, in the original. Read it in its own order and emphaſis, and without any ſupplement, and it runs thus: "The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed, that death;" and the deſtruction intends a total abolition. This plainly declares, that no enemy ſhall exiſt after the deſtruction of this death, underſtand it in what ſenſe we will. Thoſe who reſtrict it to natural death, make the text ſay, that there ſhall be no enemy to God in the univerſe after the reſurrection of the ſaints; but thoſe who underſtand it of the ſecond death inconſiſtently maintain, that this ſhall be deſtroyed, and with it every thing that is hoſtile to God and his creatures, when Chriſt ſhall come in his glorious reſt, and reign, to make all things new.

I would direct your attention to a third inſtance of this kind, which occurs in the xxxivth Pſalm, 17th verſe, "*The righteous* cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." *The righteous* is a ſupplement, which is unneceſſary, and reſtricts the ſenſe. In the preceding verſe, we ſee the antecedent, "them that do well," which all the rules of juſt interpretation require to be ſupplied, inſtead of leaping over it to the 15th verſe for a ſupplement, when the original needs it not, and is full and plain without it. But the received ſyſtem did not admit, that God would hear the cries of any after death, which is plainly implied, in their remembrance being cut off from the earth, and deliver them out of *all their troubles;* whence the tranſlators evade the plain meaning of the original, by ſupplying *The righteous*, inſtead of rendering it as they ought, "*They* cry, and the Lord heareth," &c. that is, the evil doers mentioned in the foregoing verſe.

I would adduce another inſtance, in which the ſupplement changes the ſenſe of the text. Our tranſlation, both in Mat. xx. 23. and in Mark x. 40. makes our Lord diſclaim the right of giving a ſeat on his right hand, and on his left in his kingdom and glory; whereas the original plainly aſſerts his right, and even our own verſion, if you take away the ſupplement, *it ſhall be given.* "To ſit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but to them for whom it is prepared," or, as Matthew adds, "of my Father." "As the Judge of all, his is the ſole right of diſpenſing ſeats in his kingdom."

A variation in the rendering even of a little particle may give a very material change to the ſenſe. Our tranſlation preſents Jacob as making a very mercenary compact with his Maker, and ſuſpending his acceptance of him as his God, upon his fulfilling certain terms that took more than twenty years to accompliſh, making his vow highly impious, whereas there is not the leaſt foundation for it in the original. If the correſpondent to the particle *if* had been rendered as it ought, *ſeeing* or *ſince*, all this would have been avoided, and ſuch a tranſlation, both of the Hebrew and Greek particle, would often correct, and greatly improve our verſion. So rendered, Jacob's vow, or ſolemn promiſe, would run thus, "*Seeing God will be with me*, and will keep me in the way that I go

and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; and I ſhall return in peace to my Father's houſe; and the Lord ſhall be my God, even this ſtone which I have placed as a ſtatue, ſhall be God's houſe; and, of all that thou ſhalt give me, by tithing *it*, I will give thee the tythes," Gen. xxviii. 20, 21, 22. All this is founded on the gracious promiſe given in the 15th verſe, and is no more than the expreſſion of his gratitude for that promiſe.—Jacob had long ere then taken God for his God, and would not ſuſpend the relation upon any ſuch condition, nor interpoſe a vow as a ratification of it, well knowing that a vow reſpected things that were not previouſly binding on the conſcience; whereas every intelligent creature is bound, by the very law of his exiſtence, to love, worſhip, and ſerve God. According to the literal tranſlation given above, the vow ſolely reſts on making the place of anointing the pillar at his return a place of ſolemn devotion, and in devoting to the Lord the tenth of his ſubſtance; both which he religiouſly obſerved.

Let the above ſuffice as a ſpecimen of the liberty taken with ſcripture, either through deſign or inadvertently, by which the ſenſe of the text is quite altered. Is it not dangerous to add to, or take from the word of God? It is not enough that ſuch ſupplements are given in Italics; for they are apt to miſlead the mere Engliſh reader, who ſeldom pays any attention to them; and a tranſlator ſhould never make the text the vehicle of his own comment. The few inſtances produced are ſufficient to ſhew, that no human works, as all tranſlations of the ſcripture are, are entitled to that reverence which is due to the pure word of God, and to that alone. Wiſhing we may have grace to plead for, and maintain unity in all things neceſſary, forbearance in things not eſſential, and charity in all, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your cordial friend, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees.—Ceaſe, my ſon, to hear the inſtruction that cauſeth to err from the words of knowledge.—Hearken unto me now, therefore, O ye children, and attend unto the words of my mouth Mat. xvi. 6. Prov. xix. 27. & vii. 24.—*All the words of my mouth are in righteouſneſs; there is nothing froward or perverſe in them. They are all plain to him that underſtandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.* Prov. viii. 8, 9.

Dear Sir,

TRUTH is too valuable a depoſitum to the man who ſees and feels its value, to be treated with indifference, or received or rejected upon mere human authority. It is a tree of life, every branch of which not only derives vigour and fruitfulneſs from the parent root, but alſo imparts, in its meaſure, life and beauty to the whole tree. The lopping off of any bough, inſtead of adding to the *productiveneſs of the* reſt, maims and impairs the whole. Some truths, how-

ever, are like the juice of a thriving tree, which pervades the whole, from the deepeſt root to the moſt diſtant bough. Of this nature is the univerſal doctrine, which, if true at all, God has ſpoken of it by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began; which diſcovers its importance and univerſal concern.

If the faith of Chriſtians grows exceedingly, their charity towards each other will abound, 2 Theſ. i. 3.; ſo that where there is little charity, we may of courſe infer there is little faith. Controverſy, conducted with charity, is never unfriendly to truth. When Jude exhorts Chriſtians to contend earneſtly for the faith, he does not ſay as now, or as at any future period, retained and profeſſed by the ſaints; but the faith *once* delivered to the ſaints, that is, in the holy ſcriptures; plainly intimating the ſubſequent corruptions of it. He that would contend for this, muſt lay his account to ſuffer for this branch of well doing. God creates light, as comprehending, truth, purity, and happineſs; but is not the author of darkneſs to the ſame extent, having no farther concern in the darkneſs of ignorance and ſin, than by puniſhing it with the darkneſs of ſorrow, as a mean of delivering from their ſway; an act worthy of himſelf as the Father of lights, who is at once "a juſt God and a Saviour," tho' many make his juſtice an eternal bar to his acting the part of a Saviour or a Reſtorer to by far the greater part of his intelligent creatures. "I form the light and create darkneſs: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all theſe things," Iſa. xlv. 7. The prophet, after declaring Jehovah to be a juſt God and a Saviour, adds, "Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none elſe. I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, That unto me *every* knee ſhall bow, *every* tongue ſhall ſwear." The connection here plainly ſhews, that the bowing of *every knee* to God, and the ſwearing of *every tongue*, is connected with ſalvation. There is a plain alluſion to rebels ſubmitting to their lawful Prince, bowing the knee, imploring his pardon, and, this granted, in humble homage ſwearing allegiance to him as ſuch; which includes the remiſſion of all former acts of rebellion and treaſon. What follows perfectly agrees with this, "Even to him ſhall men come; and all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed," Iſa. xlv. Men here may denote the whole race; and all that are, have, or may be incenſed againſt the Lord, and have ſhewed it by treaſon and rebellion, *ſhall be aſhamed*, which may denote a gracious ſhame, we ſee the glorious iſſue. Will not the oath of Jehovah be realized? "I have ſworn by myſelf, That unto me *every* knee ſhall bow, *every* tongue ſhall ſwear." This cannot be fully accompliſhed while a ſingle rebel exiſts in the univerſe.

In Scripture, the people of God are compared to wheat. The chaff cleaves to the wheat till it attain its maturity, and is threſhed; and if it be not fully ripe, it will require a ſharp threſhing inſtrument with teeth, to ſeparate it from the ſtraw and the chaff. Chriſt employs his fan, which includes his word and rod, to ſeparate the chaff from his wheat, and the ſeperation will not be total and complete till death. Chaff denotes error and iniquity, both in root and ſtem, which are more or leſs *inſeparable* from man in the preſent ſtate; and too much

of these cleave to the very best. The means by which they are destroyed are often compared to fire, in allusion to the ancient practice of burning the chaff on the threshing floor. To this corresponds John the Baptist's description of our Lord's official work; "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will *burn up* the chaff with unquenchable fire," Mat. iii. 12. The meaning of unquenchable fire here is obvious, a fire that shall not be extinguished till it has consumed the heap of chaff meant to be *burnt up* by it. Did John intend to represent this fire as burning without end, and the chaff as always preyed upon by it, but never consumed, he could not have fixed on a similitude less proper for his purpose. But he tells us, that our Lord will *burn up* the chaff with the fire he employs; to which the common doctrine replies—no, for the chaff will remain burning to all eternity, but shall never, never be burnt up. Is chaff fit to resist the continued operation of a great furnace of fire? The fire cannot continue to operate on that which is already burnt up, as the chaff is said to be, and a fire may be said to be unquenchable, that continues to burn till it has consumed all its fuel. Above, wicked men are compared to barren trees, unto the root of which the axe of divine justice is said to be laid, every one of which, not bringing forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire, ver. 10. But though these trees should be destroyed by that fire, yet out of their ashes can God raise immortal trees of righteousness, in which he shall be glorified.

From the connection we are taught, that our Lord will baptize some with the Holy Ghost and with fire, even a fire that shall not be quenched, till it has consumed all their chaff; so that we have no right to separate the agency of the Spirit from the operation of such a fire. Some are baptized to Christ in the cloud, by dew and rain, as of old, and some also by passing through the pillar of fire; and indeed we never should separate these two, in one form or other. Those whose chaff is burnt up here, by the refiner's fire in the word, shall not come into condemnation hereafter; but such as carry their chaff with them into another world, must pass through another kind of furnace, that of unquenchable fire, the operation of which *shall burn up the chaff*. What God has called into being falls not under the designation of chaff; but is the precious wheat that shall be gathered into the garner. He is the Father of our spirits, and the framer of our bodies, and he knows how to fan and purge them, so as to save them from perishing irrecoverably with the chaff.—The above views of burning up the chaff, struck the mind forcibly one morning in family-prayer, and their consistence with truth is submitted to your judgment; for the inference from them appeared just.

I recollect, that in the extracts from Dr Ryland's sermon, which I happen not to have just now by me, he charges the friends of the Universal doctrine with making the future misery of many more aggravated than it would otherwise be. The same reproach attaches to the whole word of God, wherever it is, or may be known; for it proves the savour of death unto death to those *who reject it*. The great question to be determined is, Is that doctrine of God, *or is it not? If it be of him*, he will see to its effects on those that abuse it, but

will thank none for making theſe a reaſon for concealing it, as if they were wiſer, or more tender of the ends of holineſs than himſelf. Every truth of God will produce good fruit when believed, and the Univerſal doctrine is beſt known, by its genuine effects on the heart, when properly underſtood, and duly embraced. If I underſtand it aright, it propoſes more powerful motives to faith and holineſs here, and lays a more effectual reſtraint upon our worſt paſſions, than the doctrine of eternal damnation can pretend to. Is it nothing to the abettors of that doctrine, that the view they give of the Father of mercies, as executing eternal vengeance upon his creatures, and, according to ſome, even upon millions of infants, caſt into hell fire, from the womb, the knee, and the breaſt, has contributed more to make Deiſts, than perhaps all the other errors that have been grafted upon Chriſtianity? If they are found lying for God, denying him the honour which he claims as a Father; and aſcribing to him what he abhors, the blood of ſuch will he require at their hand, beſides the puniſhment they deſerve for groſsly ſlandering his own character. Theſe things deſerve their attention, and indeed, the attention of all.

Many ſeem more anxious to aſcertain and defend what God may do in juſtice with his guilty creatures, than what he has ſaid he will actually do, as if our whole concern lay with the former. Thus the latter is often overlooked, and a train of ſpecious reaſoning founded on the former, and concluſions drawn from it, as if theſe were an infallible key to the knowledge of what God will in fact accompliſh. This is a very fallacious mode of arguing, with regard to the divine procedure, however common, and, indeed, concluſive in the opinion of ſome.

When it has been hinted, that it is agreeable to the character of a merciful Father to puniſh, or correct his children for their profit, it has been archly replied, That wicked men are nor God's children, but the children of the devil. This was thought to be ſufficient proof, that no mercy can be extended to them. But then the ſame reaſon militates againſt God's ſaving any of the human race; for all that do the works of the devil, as all impenitent ſinners do, have him for their father, our Lord being judge. "Ye are of your father, the devil, and his works ye will do."—But he is not the father of any, either in ſoul or body, as they are creatures, but only as they are ſinners; and the Lord knows how to deſtroy the works and acquired image of Satan, and yet ſave that which was originally formed after his own image. Though the leading traces of God's moral image are by ſin effaced from the human ſoul, yet man is the natural image of Jeſus Chriſt, the God that made and upholds all things. What God does every day, in perfect conſiſtency with his character and word, converting children of the wicked one, into filial members of his own family, he may do when, where, and upon whom he pleaſeth; and who has a right to limit the exerciſe of his mercy?

A very great diverſity of character is obſervable among mankind, ſome being very monſters of iniquity, and others poſſeſſing many amiable qualities, which adorn human nature, and benefit ſociety; though they themſelves cannot be counted pious and holy, in the ſcripture ſenſe. The common doctrine dooms them all to one and the ſame puniſhment in a future ſtate, ſo far as it reſpects *the duration of their impriſonment*; making this eternal in both caſes. Cle

and endleſs confinement is of itſelf a great puniſhment. Every good gift cometh from God; and conſequently theſe moral virtues, which adorn many perſons that cannot be called religious. Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? But the above abettors of the common doctrine deny him this right, by ſhutting him up under the neceſſity of never opening the houſe of his priſoners beyond the grave, to relieve, to all eternity, ſo much as any one claſs or individual. Let who can reconcile this with what is declared of him, That he looſeth the priſoners—that he deſpiſes not his priſoners—that he brings them out of the pit in which there is no water—that he looks down from heaven, and hears their groaning, and delivers the children of death, and the like.

Did Chriſt teach his diſciples to pray in terms that ſhall never be realized? "Our Father in heaven, let thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." This petition will not be fully anſwered, till God creates the new earth, in which ſhall dwell righteouſneſs; but anſwered, it ſhall be; for every prayer inſpired or dictated by the great Prophet of the church, is equivalent to a prediction. Much more is included in the petition, "Thy kingdom come," than we can yet underſtand.

The received ſyſtem, as held and explained by many, dooms all that die in infancy, a few favoured ones excepted, to never-ceaſing impriſonment and miſery, merely for a ſin which was committed thouſands of years before the far greater part of them exiſted, and in the commiſſion of which their will had no concern, any more than in rejecting the remedy provided againſt the effects of the firſt apoſtacy in general. Is not God the father of all ſuch? and where then is his honour in that character from thoſe who maintain ſuch a view of his adminiſtration, in oppoſition to the voice of nature, the diſpenſations of his providence, and the diſcoveries of his love, grace and mercy, in the goſpel, which are over all his works, and conſequently over infants? How long ſhall men father on their Maker the ſpurious brood of their own contracted bowels, and vain reaſonings, and, under the pretext of doing him honour, make him a far worſe father than themſelves? "This their way is their folly; yet their poſterity approve their ſayings *," Pſal. xlix. 13.

* Many are exceedingly offended at the very ſuppoſition, that God will not conſign to endleſs miſery all that die in infancy, a very few excepted, tho' they can produce no authority from ſcripture for ſo wild a notion! What views can they have of God as a father—the Father of mercies, who is great in mercy, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works? To ſuppoſe he will act the part of a father to ſuch, kindles their indignation as much, as if an attempt was made to overturn the whole Chriſtian ſyſtem; and yet this blind paſſion is characterized laudable zeal for truth. A ſon among men honoureth his father; but if God be a father, the father of all, and has not yet forfeited his character, where is his honour from ſuch men? Mal. i. 6. By the common doctrine, all mankind are under a ſentence of endleſs damnation from the womb, ſo that actual ſins can only enhance their miſery. What are called the Supralapſarian and the Sublapſarian ſchemes, amount to the ſame thing in this reſpect.

For the comfort of parents, who lament the death of their dear offspring, and for the vindication of God's paternal character from the ſlanders of bigots, who make liableneſs to eternal damnation, and the actual endurance of it, the neceſſary conſequence of original ſin, the Author makes free to tranſcribe a paragraph from his miſſionary ſermon, publiſhed in 1797.

"In the preſent ſtate of things, the death of ſo great a proportion of the human race in infancy, ought to be viewed as an act both of wiſdom and goodneſs in God, who does nothing without the beſt of reaſons, and has not given exiſtence to any being in vain. They are taken *from many evils to come*, and from the worſt of evils, the fatal influence of corrupt examples, *ſo prevalent every where*, and too often ſet them by the very beings who, under God, gave them

Is it the *will* of God our Saviour that *all men* ſhould be *ſaved*, or *reſtored*, and come to the knowledge of the truth, and does he aſſign this as a reaſon why we ſhould pray for *all* men, and that too without doubting, or with an aſſurance of being heard, and ſhall his will never be accompliſhed? 1 Tim. ii. 4. Seeing the ſame term is uſed in the original, that our Lord uſes in John xvii. 24. "Father, I *will* that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am." If his will can fail of ſecuring the event willed in the one caſe, why not in the other? and ſo thoſe that were given to him by his Father, be never with him in heaven? While we with juſtice deny the latter, let us not maintain, that only a few of the human race ſhall reap benefit from the mediation of Chriſt in the world to come;—that with regard to the far greater part of them, it had been

exiſtence and birth. Not only the ſeed of the ungodly, who are frequently ſacrificed more effectually to the wicked one, than children were of old to Moloch, are taken away, by an early death, from many evils to come; but even the children of pious parents, who often ſee them, with continued pain and ſorrow, go aſtray when ſpared; whence the bitter lamentations of David over the untimely death of his unnatural ſon Abſalom. And not only are they taken away from future evils, but we would indulge the pleaſing hope, till the word of God forbid it, that they are removed to the poſſeſſion of a happineſs which the world cannot give: for if the momentary pains of about a hundred and twenty thouſand perſons, that could not diſcern between their right hand and their left, yea, the preſervation of brute animals, weighed with God as a reaſon for ſparing vaſt multitudes of adult ſinners, when their crimes had procured a dread denunciation of ſpeedy deſtruction; can we for a moment admit, that the eternal miſery of any proportion of infants, or indeed of any intelligent beings, can be a matter of indifference to the benign Author of all exiſtence, who regards his creatures, without exception, with a parents eye? Jonah iv. 11. What valuable purpoſe can ſuch a ſacrifice ſerve, under his wiſe and juſt adminiſtration? or what perfection of his nature requires it to be made?

"If the bowels of the divine mercy yearn over old tranſgreſſors, who have voluntarily offended their Maker times paſt number, and importunately ſolicit their acceptance; can we ſuppoſe them ſhut and ſealed againſt thoſe who never offended him, nor once deſpiſed or rejected the remedy provided? Such a conduct be far from him. The Judge of all the earth will do right. The infinite merits of the ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven, will be more effectual to ſave, we have reaſon to hope, than the firſt ſin of the firſt Adam can be to condemn. This admitted, the oppoſers of the doctrine of original ſin will be deprived of their moſt cogent pleas againſt it. The early removal of ſuch little ones, of whom the kingdom of heaven is ſaid to be made up, while others have their days lengthened out, and are perhaps left to periſh in their ſins, affords ſufficient ſcope to the divine ſovereignty, tho' we extend not its operation to the ſtate beyond the grave, to the everlaſting miſery of unoffending millions of our race. Theſe adult ſinners, who can preſume on the divine mercy for themſelves, and yet exclude from its benefit many of God's intelligent offspring, who never offended him, have reaſon to fear, that with what judgment they judge they ſhall be judged; and with what meaſure they met it ſhall be meaſured to them again; for if ſuch things, upon their own principles, may be done in the green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?

"The afflictions and death of children are intended for the benefit of others, and often for the correction of parents, for not training them up for the Lord, or ſuffering them to occupy that place in their cares and affections, which ought to be ſacred to himſelf, and the concerns of their ſouls and eternity, or for ſome other wiſe ends. When theſe ends are otherwiſe anſwered, this ſevere diſcipline, there is reaſon to hope, will be happily ſuperceded." p. 40, 41.

The ſearch of the ſcriptures, when the ſermon of which this is a paragraph was compoſed, paved the way for ſeeing the Univerſal doctrine in the light of divine truth, the detached beams of which began even then to ſhine, though their tendency and iſſue were not for ſome years after perceived. The reader will indulge the inſertion here of an epitaph, which has appeared in ſome of our periodical works.

Bold infidelity turn pale!
Beneath this ſtone four infants aſhes lie;
Say, are they loſt or ſaved?
If death's by ſin, they ſinn'd, becauſe they're here;
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear.
Reaſon, ah! how deprav'd!
Revere the Bible's ſacred page, the knot's unty'd;
They dy'd, for Adam ſinn'd—they live, for Jeſus dy'd.

a thouſand times better for them they had never been born; ſeeing this is now the condemnation, "That light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil," John iii. 19. Shall not the will of God our Saviour prove effectual at length, in ſaving or reſtoring the great maſs of men who are not ſaved in the preſent ſtate? Hath he ſaid it, and ſhall he not do it?

If every high-prieſt taken from among men, was to have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way, without exception, from the conſideration that he himſelf alſo was compaſſed with infirmity, Heb. v. 1, 2. will the great high-prieſt of our profeſſion, who became bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh, and ſubmitted to our innocent infirmities, that he might have a fellow-feeling with us, never ſhew compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, a very few comparatively of that deſcription excepted? It is not his manner, in exerciſing his office, to come ſhort of thoſe by whom he was prefigured; for the office of prieſthood under the law, was but the ſhadow of good things to come; but the body or reality is of Chriſt. Let him have the glory of his perfect work.

Is our Lord the firſt begotten, or born of, or from the dead, the ſame as the high prieſt of the dead, the prieſthood of old belonging to the firſt-born in every family, as types of him; and are there unknown millions of dead for whom he never did, and never ſhall perform one ſingle act of the prieſtly office? What the Aaronical prieſthood was to the Jewiſh nation, that and much more is the Lord Jeſus, the *prieſt for ever*, or *for the age*, after the order of Melchizedeck, to the human race. He is declared to be the Lord, the ruler and ſovereign of the dead as well as of the living, and that as Mediator, and in reward of his mediation, and will he never act a part correſponding to theſe titles, which in him are not nominal, for that the far greater part of the dead, and for none at all of thoſe whoſe caſe is moſt deſperate, and conſequently moſt worthy of his attention, and chiefly fitted to diſplay his ſaving power? He is of one mind, and not to be turned.

Is our Lord declared, in general terms, to be the *reſurrection and the life*, and is there a grave in which his quickening voice ſhall never be heard, and from which his mighty power ſhall never raiſe, even a ſingle individual, however much that reſurrection might redound to his glory? The analogy of nature, and the voice of truth agree in ſhewing, that out of the deſtruction, or corruption of vegetative, and animal ſubſtances, and moral power correſponding, freſh life is raiſed, and conſequently this may be yet realized in the grave of the ſecond death. We ſhould not preſume to limit the thrice Holy One of Iſrael, but where we are very certain he has limited himſelf.

If God has included, under the expreſſive term *death*, the aggregate of human miſery—if he has ſent his Son to deſtroy it, and if he muſt reign till he has put all enemies under his feet, of which the *ſecond death* is certainly the principal, and if death ſhall actually be deſtroyed as the very laſt of all theſe enemies, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. how ſay ſo many among us, that death ſhall exiſt, reign, and *torment for ever, or without end*? When God ſpeaks in general terms, who *has a right to reſtrict* his words, or to come after this King to correct and qua-

lify his language? A tyrant cannot be deſtroyed, with all his forces, and yet retain all his captives in perpetual chains. We ſhould create no inexplicable myſteries where none exiſt, and we cannot be innocent, if we make the word of truth, without any neceſſity, except that of making it ſpeak the language of a ſyſtem, the occaſion of ſtumbling to any. The Lord will require it, and much of the infidelity of every age will at length be laid at the door of thoſe who take away the key of knowledge, and render the ſcriptures of truth, the lively oracles of our heavenly Father, a cunningly deviſed fable. By ſhunning to declare any known part of the counſel of God—by oppoſing and condemning free inquiry into the ſacred text,—or by putting an unfair conſtruction upon it, men may bring upon themſelves the blood of their fellow-creatures.

If Chriſt aſcended up far above all heavens, *that he might fill all things*, Eph. iv. 10. if the church is the fulneſs of him that *filleth all things*, and if, when he ſhall have ſubdued *all things to himſelf*, God the Father ſhall be *all in all* in them, and the great Jehovah *inherit all things*, can we ſuppoſe, that when he ſhall thus poſſeſs them as his temple, and inherit them as his heritage, they ſhall remain polluted, the intelligent part of them, twice dead, ſtrewed like the fragments of a putrified body upon the ſurface of the burning lake, or the dry bones in the valley, and lie under the power and dominion of ſin, Satan and death, as the common doctrine aſſerts? What the Lord inherits, he revives and beautifies; for the tread of his foot, the touch of his hand, or the breath of his lips, imparts life to the dead.

May we not apply the words of Aſaph to the caſe in hand? "Will the Lord caſt off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever; doth his promiſe fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious; hath he in anger ſhut up *his tender mercies?* Pſal. lxxvii. The queſtions are put in general terms, and the pſalmiſt acknowledges that the very ſuppoſition that the caſe might be ſo, or his mournful queries to that effect, were the reſult of his culpable infirmity. The word of God plainly teaches us elſewhere, that his *tender mercies* will never be ſhut up in anger againſt any of his creatures; for *his tender mercies are* and ſhall be *over all his works*, Pſal. cxlv. 9. over his creatures, without exception, and over any puniſhment that may be inflicted on them, as a hen ſpreads her wings over her tender brood, to cheriſh and defend them, the image to which the text plainly alludes. It is impoſſible that the common doctrine and that text can ſtand together, for the one neceſſarily overturns the other, a ſerious thought to thoſe who are determined to defend it at all hazards, and, like their brother Jonah, think they do well to be angry, even to the death, ſhould God not make an eternal ſacrifice to his juſtice of all his intelligent creatures, the elect part of them excepted. In the Greek verſion of that Pſalm, the 13th verſe, of which this is the literal rendering, is followed by a diſtich which is not now extant in any of the Hebrew copies, "Thy kingdom is the kingdom of *all the ages*, and thy dominion is in every generation and generation. *The Lord is faithful in all his words, and holy* or *merciful in all his works;*" the ſame that is repeated in the laſt clauſe of the 17th verſe, and rendered on the margin *merciful* or *bountiful*.

Do thoſe then make void the law or word of God, who make future pun-

ment to be a work of mercy, and place the puniſhed under the wings of mercy, and will in the iſſue rejoice againſt judgment; or, as it may be rendered, and is by ſome, *boaſt*, *glory*, or *exalt itſelf* over or above judgment? They tread on ſure ground, ſolid as a rock, who tread on God's ground, and may confidently affirm what he has aſſerted before them in plain unequivocal terms. The Lord will be juſtified when he ſpeaketh, and clear when he judgeth; and alſo thoſe whoſe lips retain his words of knowledge, and mouth utters the great things of his law, Pſal. li. 4. Mal. ii. 6, 7.

How a finite being can bear a load of miſery increaſing or accumulating to all eternity, as the wages of increaſing ſin, and conſequently a load of miſery infinite in its burden or preſſure, is one of the greateſt myſteries, or a palpable abſurdity; for this would require almighty ſtrength to ſupport it even for a moment. Will men maintain a ſyſtem that converts all the wicked in the other world, angels and men, into a kind of omnipotent beings, rather than liſten to the voice of truth, of common ſenſe, and of humanity and mercy? "The ways of the Lord are equal."

How every ſin is an infinite evil, becauſe committed againſt an infinite Being, and muſt therefore entail infinite puniſhment, as is generally aſſerted, by the advocates of endleſs miſery—how this can be, without deſtroying the ſeveral aggravations of ſin, and introducing as many infinities as there have been, are, or may be of ſins committed in the univerſe, is to me quite incomprehenſible, and appears ſubverſive of the plaineſt dictates of ſcripture and common ſenſe. What nonſenſical jargon has been often advanced with an air of triumph, in ſupport of a favourite hypotheſis! Infinity, like eternity, is one, and cannot admit of degrees. If every ſin is an infinite evil, in the ſenſe pleaded for, then the mediation or death of Chriſt could procure the pardon of one ſin only; for unbounded as the merits of his death are, they cannot exceed infinity. The ſcriptures however tell us, that his blood cleanſeth from all ſin, which clearly refutes ſuch ſophiſtical arguments. If God's infinite dignity give ſin, as committed againſt him, infinite demerit; then, by parity of reaſon, a gracious action, having him for its object, and his glory for its end, muſt acquire infinite merit, which is quite inadmiſſible. Thus the argument, like the legs of the lame, is not equal, and overturns itſelf.

What are we then to think of that common, plauſible mode of reaſoning, which, like a torrent, carries many before it? By attempting to magnify the demerit of ſin, and aſcertain the eternity of future puniſhment, it annihilates the merits, and circumſcribes the efficacy of the Saviour's death. But, admit that ſin is of infinite demerit, this does not prevent the pardon of it in the elect, for the ſake of Jeſus; and God may forgive others, if it ſeem good in his ſight, upon the ſame principle.

When the ſame word or phraſe occurs twice in the ſame verſe, relative to the ſame ſubject, without any hint leading to take it, in either clauſe, in a different ſenſe, by what law do we make free to extend it in the one clauſe, and to reſtrict it in the other? Thus the *all* that die in Adam, are underſtood to intend all *mankind*, but the *all* that ſhall be made alive in Chriſt, only the elect, 1 Cor. xv. 22. *the many that* were made ſinners by the diſobedience of one man, and

the many that ſhall be made righteous by the obedience of one, are alſo ſo qualified, Rom. v. 19. that the *many* who are dead by the offence of one, are not the ſame *many* unto whom the gift by grace, which is by Jeſus Chriſt, has abounded, v. 15.; the former denoting the whole human race, the latter only the elect, the firſt fruits. Alſo, that the ſame *all men*, twice mentioned in the 18th verſe, are not the ſame *all men*, but to be taken as above. Therefore, as by the offence of one, or by one offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, or by one righteouſneſs, the free gift came upon all men to juſtification of life." By the liberty here taken with the ſacred text, it is poſſible to make any thing of it. The apoſtle adds, "But where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound," ver. 20. Here the common doctrine comes in, with its uſual modeſty, to correct, or rather contradict the text. According to it, ſin has abounded in millions to their deſtruction, in whom grace, ſo far from ſuperabounding, they ſhall never receive the leaſt benefit from it.*

* The candid reader will excuſe my giving an extract from a ſermon, which gives a clear conciſe view of the goſpel ſcheme of ſalvation, and eſtabliſhes its extent, in purchaſe and application, upon a ſcripture baſis.

"In the epiſtle to the Romans, Paul inſiſts upon the general redemption and ſalvation of mankind, and of the final reſtoration of all things. In chapter v. he takes up the ſubject, as tho' he meant for ever to prevent all diſputes about it, and ſpeaks of Adam and Chriſt as univerſal heads of the human race; that ſin, miſery, and death, came by the one; and righteouſneſs, happineſs, and eternal life, in the ſame manner to all, by the other. The offence of one, and the obedience of the other; the ruin brought upon all mankind by the firſt, and the grace, life, and gifts of righteouſneſs, beſtowed and brought to all by the laſt, are ſet in oppoſition and contraſt one to the other; with theſe two differences. 1*ſt*, That the grace of God, and the gift by grace, by Jeſus, hath much more abounded to the multitude, to give life to thoſe who were dead, than the offence and ſin of Adam did to deſtroy them. 2*d*, That whereas man was ruined and condemned by one offence, our Saviour's obedience and ſacrifice juſtifies us from many, or the multitude of our offences; being ſet forth as a gift of righteouſneſs for that purpoſe. Theſe two great differences Paul makes between the *offence* and *free gift*; but never gives the leaſt hint of the ruin being more extenſive than the recovery, but quite the reverſe; for he ſays, "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even ſo, "by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men to juſtification of life." Here is general proviſion plainly ſpoken of; but the apoſtle does not ſtop here, but goes on to ſhew that the application ſhall be as extenſive, and as certainly efficacious for the recovery of man, as ever it was really provided: For, *as* by the offence of one, many were *made ſinners*; *ſo*, by the obedience of one, ſhall many be *made righteous*.

"The ſame term of *many*, is uſed in both members of the ſentence; and if it doth not intend the ſame perſons in both, the compariſon doth not exactly hold. They were poſitively made ſinners, and ſhall juſt as certainly and poſitively be made righteous: And as ſin and corruption came upon all men, through the diſobedience of Adam, who was the fountain-head of the human race; ſo, thro' the obedience of Chriſt, who is the head of every man, ſhall all be made righteous, and ſhall finally derive both righteouſneſs, ſtrength, a new nature, and holineſs from him.

"The Apoſtle goes on to confirm this meaning, by ſaying, "Moreover, the law entered "that the offence might abound; but where ſin abounded grace did much more abound: That "as ſin has reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs, unto eternal "life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord," Rom. v. 20 21.

"We all know that ſin hath abounded, to the ruin and deſtruction of all mankind; but how grace can be ſaid, with any propriety, to abound *much more*, and yet *eternally* to leave moſt of the human race under the power of ſin and miſery, is a myſtery to me! If grace abounds more than ſin, it muſt be equally extenſive, and more powerful; and if the univerſal recovery of man is a truth, then ſhall grace abound *much more* than ſin, and reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; even as ſin hath reigned unto death. Then may we ſing,

But it remains for the friends of that doctrine to prove, that the ſame all who died in Adam, ſhall never be made alive in Chriſt—that the ſame many who were made ſinners by the diſobedience of one, the firſt Adam, ſhall never be made righteous by the obedience of one, even of Chriſt;---that where ſin abounded grace ſhall never much more abound, however expreſs the aſſertions of the apoſtle to the contrary. They muſt alſo prove, to make good their point, that the prey ſhall never be wholly taken from the mighty, nor the lawful captives, or the captives of the law delivered, Iſa. xlix. 25. Likewiſe that the laſt viſion in the book of Revelation is not to be placed, in order of time, after the one that precedes, as might be naturally expected, but in ſome other period or ſtate antecedent or poſterior to the laſt judgment, Heaven knows when or where. That millions of enemies ſhall exiſt, and that for ever, after the very laſt enemy is deſtroyed;---that after *all* rule, *all* power and authority are put down, that of God himſelf excepted, the rule, power, and authority of ſin, Satan, and the ſecond death ſhall exiſt and reign over ſubjects countleſs as the ſand to all eternity;---that tho' Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners, even the chief, yet he ſhall ſave only ſome, and none at all of the chief of ſinners, that depart this life; and that Jeſus' coming into the world to ſave ſinners, and the chief of them, is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, only when ſo limited, 1 Tim. i. 15. That the glorious year of jubilee under the law, to

> " Sin reign'd to death; but over ſin
> " And death, with more imperial ſway,
> " Grace ſpreads her more extenſive reign,
> " And doth eternal life convey."

" But if general reſtoration be not a truth, the words ſhould be reverſed, and it ſhould be ſaid, that *ſin hath abounded more than grace:* in that caſe there could be no compariſon between them, far leſs could grace claim the ſuperior ſway. But enough has been ſaid to prove, that Paul held and taught general as well as particular redemption; and univerſal reſtoration, as well as the doctrine of election. And if you can find, in the 9th and 11th of the Romans, ſome, even a remnant of Iſrael choſen, and the reſt rejected, forſaken, and caſt off; I can find in the latter chapter, that they ſhall be received again, and grafted in again (for God is able to graft them in again) that *all* Iſrael ſhall be ſaved; that ungodlineſs ſhall be turned from Jacob; that God ſhall make a new covenant with them, and take their ſins away; that they are ſtill beloved for their fathers' ſake, and ſhall obtain mercy: For God hath *concluded them all in unbelief*—for what? Why hath he ſhut them up in unbelief together ſo long, or ſo many hundreds of years? Common ſyſtems will tell us, *That they might be damned to all eternity;* but Paul ſays, *That he might have mercy upon all.*," Rom. xi. 32.—Wincheſter's ſermon, entitled, The Goſpel preached by the Apoſtles. &c.

The worthy author of the above ſermon ſuffered much perſecution, as appears from his life, publiſhed by Mr Vidler, London, from the zealots in his time, on account of his principles; yet was much reſpected by many, both at home and abroad. Few, if any, of thoſe who are ſo ready to condemn him unheard, as their manner is, are fit to compare with him for learning, as a ſcholar; for piety, as a Chriſtian; or ſucceſs, as a miniſter of the goſpel: for he left many ſeals of his miniſtry, both in America and in England, and his works will praiſe him in the gate, when that divinity which favours too much of the wiſdom of man ſhall be obſcured by the increaſing beams of ſcripture light. "It is a light matter to be judged of man. Many have been condemned by profeſſors on earth, even Moſes and the prophets, Chriſt and his apoſtles not excepted, whom their final Judge ſhall acquit; and he will at length condemn many whom the judgment of men has canonized. " Joſhua and Caleb ſpoke unto all the company of the children of Iſrael, &c; but all the congregation bade ſtone them with ſtones. Surely they ſhall not ſee the land, &c.; but my ſervant Caleb, becauſe he hath another ſpirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his ſeed ſhall poſſeſs it." Num. xiv.

which nothing parallel hath yet taken place, or will, we have reaſon to think, before the laſt judgment, ſhall never be realized under the Meſſiah's reign.

We may reſt aſſured, that the Spirit of God never employs an ill-choſen ſimile or metaphor, or one that naturally conveys an idea contrary to the truth meant to be inculcated. That paſſage in the 75th Pſalm 8th verſe, has, therefore, ſtruck me, as ſubverſive of the endleſs duration of future miſery. "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the ſame; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth ſhall wring them out, and drink them." I find the verſe thus rendered in Biſhop Have's Latin verſion, which does more juſtice to the original. "In Jehovah's hand there is a cup, and the wine is new, or ſtrong; he mixed it full;" that is, filled it up by infuſing intoxicating ingredients, "and poured out of it; and the dregs thereof ſhall be preſſed out, all the ungodly of the earth ſhall drink them." The difficulty to me here is, how the wicked can be ſaid to drink out the dregs of that cup, and yet continue to drink it to all eternity, without exhauſting it in the leaſt, or being able to come at the dregs? Yet this muſt be the caſe if the common doctrine be true.

Our verſion makes all the wicked wring out the dregs of the cup of wrath, as well as drink them, but it is more natural, as in the Biſhop's verſion, where the firſt verb is in the paſſive voice, *wrung or preſſed out.* The connection directs to God as the agent, and the action of wringing, ſqueezing, or preſſing out juice that might remain in the dregs, is to be aſcribed to the hand that holds the cup. The threatening that all the remains of the bitter intoxicating liquor ſhall be preſſed out of the thick ſediment or dregs, and that all the wicked of the earth ſhall be obliged to drink them up, as well as the reſt of the contents of the cup, indicates the certainty, and the terrible nature of future puniſhment. But I appeal to any one, if this does not alſo plainly and neceſſarily convey the idea of exhauſted miſery; what can never take place upon the common ſyſtem; and will any preſume to ſay, that God employs a figure which conveys a truth he did not intend, or contradicts any truth elſewhere revealed?

We come beſt at the knowledge of the truth, by conſidering ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, ſcripture with ſcripture. The ſame expreſſive figures are applied to the church, which will be granted to intend paternal correction, though ſevere, but not unceaſing miſery. "O Jeruſalem, which has drunk of the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury: thou haſt drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out," Iſa. li. 17. Here is the idea of exhauſted miſery, and therefore it is added, "Thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou ſhalt no more drink it again," ver. 22. Let the word of truth ſpeak for itſelf, and be its own interpreter, and let men be ſilent before it.

Which of the two ſchemes does moſt honour to divine truth, and its Author, that which ſets the ſcripture at variance with itſelf, or that which reconciles and harmonizes the whole, a few miſtranſlated and equivocal terms and phraſes excepted? Is it a crime to attempt to harmonize it, by the aid of the word of truth itſelf, the light of ſober reaſon, and the dictates of common ſenſe? And

can the man who makes the attempt deſerve for ſo doing the execration of mankind, eſpecially of profeſſors?

So ſuperabundant is the evidence upon this important ſubject, that I find it difficult to make ſuch a ſelection from the proofs that preſent themſelves to my mind, as not to extend this correſpondence beyond due bounds. I can ſcarce open my bible but ſome ſtricking paſſage or other in proof of the reſtoration, preſents itſelf to my view. Reading the 14th of Iſaiah lately, this thought was forcibly ſuggeſted, by this clauſe in the 17th verſe, "that opened not the houſe of his priſoners," or, as the margin more ſignificantly reads it, *did not let his priſoners looſe homeward.* Will God realize, under his own benign adminiſtration, the very thing he reprobated in the king of Babylon, as one of the blackeſt traits in his character, as a type or figure of Satan, the great adverſary of the human race, and makes the ſurrounding heathen nations reprobate as a conduct abhorent to the very light of nature? I felt an impulſe to ſay, God forbid—that be far from thee, whoſe adminiſtration cannot be compared to that of the proud Chaldean monarch! But thoſe whom he kept in confinement to the day of their death were not his children, they would be chiefly priſoners of war, or princes like Zedekiah, who violated their oath of allegiance to him; but the popular ſyſtem makes God treat his own creatures, who are his offspring, in this manner, and far worſe, not only confining them as long as he exiſts, but alſo tormenting them with the moſt excruciating tortures in ſoul and body, and giving them freſh vigour at certain intervals only to make them ſtrong to ſuffer. Little is God indebted to the bulk of Chriſtians for the character they have given him; and little is Chriſtianity obliged to their general ſchemes of theology, which have ſo often ſet the world on fire. I muſt be excuſed if I ſhould not thus join with them in diſgracing the throne of my Father's glory, and allowed to give him cordial thanks for having happily delivered me from the wormwood and the gall of ſuch a ſyſtem, and, I truſt, raiſed me for "the defence of the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God," as at firſt delivered to the ſaints.

The common doctrine repreſents huſbands and parents rejoicing at the laſt day over the damnation of their unconverted wives and children, and ſo of every other relation. It alſo makes the whole church of the redeemed ſhout with triumph, while they behold the ſmoke of the torment of the wicked aſcending up *for ever and ever*, or, as in the original, *for the age of ages*. It makes the perfection of all their graces to be conſiſtent with the total extinction of the moſt noble feelings of the human heart, and with diſobedience to the plaineſt precepts of the goſpel, as if Chriſt's commands would be totally ſuperceded in heaven. "Thou ſhalt love thine enemy" is his command, and it ſhall never be reverſed. We ſhould love like God our Father in heaven, who diſtinguiſhes betwixt what his offspring are as the creatures of his power, and what they have made themſelves by ſin. Love never leads to rejoice in the miſery of its object, but rather to commiſerate. Some of the greateſt of our divines, as they are called, are very expreſs in maintaining the above view of things, and it is neceſſary *to the conſiſtency of* their ſyſtem, though diametrically contrary to the nature *of God, to the native* operation of the graces of his Spirit in the renewed heart, *and to the example* of all the precepts of Chriſt.

It may therefore be viewed, and the doctrine that makes it neceſſary, as a device of Satan, and a part of the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit, by which the church has been ſo long, and ſo extenſively obſcured. I recollect that when a boy, though then taught to receive with reverence whatever the prieſt and the ſchoolmen ſay, that the above view of things would not go down at all, but excited a kind of horror. My heart revolted at the thought, that my own parents might yet perform that cruel office over me, or I over them, while doomed to endleſs wo. But the doctrine of the reſtoration reconciles all this, and makes it perfectly in character in the church of the Redeemed, to rejoice and give praiſe at the moſt terrible of God's works, becauſe neceſſary, as a mean to bring about the moſt glorious and memorable of all ends—the reſtitution of all things, or their delivery from vanity and the bondage of corruption, to the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

We are told by John, that the Lord has created all things, and that for his pleaſure they are and were created; and this is aſſigned as the reaſon why he is worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power, Rev. iv. 11. If all things were created for his pleaſure, and if this alſo be the great end of their continued preſervation, as the apoſtle tells us it is, can this end be anſwered, in the whole, I would aſk, ſhould the far greater part of his intelligent creatures eternally lie under the dominion of ſin and miſery? It would be little ſhort of blaſphemy to inſinuate, that he can miſcarry in the end he had in view, in giving and continuing exiſtence: but the advocates of the popular doctrine muſt grant, either that this end ſhall not be ſecured in the damned, or that God will take pleaſure in their continued exiſtence in a ſtate of torment. This he diſclaims even with an oath. "Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die? ſaith the Lord God:—As I live, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked," Ezek. xviii. 23,—33.

Would the church pray, as ſhe does in the lxxxiii. pſalm, that the puniſhment of the wicked perſecutors in the next world might be over-ruled of God as a mean of bringing them to ſeek his face, and to own that he is the Moſt High over all the earth, if their deplorable caſe admit not of the leaſt relief to all eternity? Does the Spirit inſpire prayers that contradict the truth of the word, and ſo cannot be anſwered?——Did the kings of the earth pay voluntary homage and tribute to Solomon, and ſeek to him for his wiſdom, as an eminent type of Meſſiah, eſpecially in the ſtate of the New Jeruſalem reſt, of which his peaceful reign was a figure, and ſhall he receive nothing but forced homage from them, either then, or at any prior period? Will the antitype come far ſhort of the type?

Did Joſeph, as a remarkable type of the great Mediator, ſave not only his own brethren, who were typical of the church of the firſt-born, from the effects of the great famine, but alſo all the Egyptians, and many of the ſurrounding heathen, both of whom were a figure of the reſt of the world; and ſhall Jeſus never give a crumb of the bread of life to any but his own legitimated brethren the elect? Theſe in general count all the reſt dogs; but what ſhall they ſay, ſhould Chriſt yet put in *their* mouths the words of the Syrophenician woman, "*Truth, Lord, yet the dogs* eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's t

ble?" Such dogs have often brought more honour to our Lord than the profeſſed children of the family *.

Was the head of the Dragon and Leviathan, Pharaoh, ſo broken in the Red Sea, that he there loſt his life, and his dominion over his ſubjects, never more to recover the latter; and ſhall Satan for ever retain his power over all his ſubjects, who ſhall be overwhelmed with him in the lake of fire? though it be admitted that the Egyptian tyrant was a ſtriking type of the head of the infernal legions, that Leviathan who beholdeth all high things, and is king over all the children of pride, Job xli. 3, 4.

Shall the little leaven of the goſpel never leaven the whole lump or maſs of human nature;—the leaven hid in three meaſures of meal, never leaven the whole?——I cannot recollect any portion of Scripture where the elect are called *the nations*, they being repreſented as choſen from among the nations, and redeemed from the earth. And yet the leaves of the tree of life are ſaid to be for the healing of the nations, and its fruit for their food, and that at a period when the elect ſhall be completely ſaved. The wiping away tears from off all faces, and all eyes, &c. by him who ſhall fill the throne in the New Jeruſalem, is ſaid to be future to the deſcent of that city, as the tabernacle of God that ſhall dwell with men, and by means of which he ſhall dwell among them, Rev. xxi. and xxii. 2. Let the advocates for the unceaſing reign of miſery, weeping, crying, and death, tell us, what nations ſhall then need healing, who they are that ſhall be found then ſhedding tears, ſorrowing, crying, and in pain; who they are in whom the old things ſhall not have paſſed away before that period, and what death it is that ſhall then exiſt, but which, along with the other things mentioned, ſhall then be deſtroyed to exiſt no more. If you examine the deſcription given of the millenial Jeruſalem, by the prophet Ezekiel, and compare it with the account given by John of this glorious city, you will ſee ſufficient reaſon to convince you, that they mean not one and the ſame ſtate of the church. That the ſtate of glory in the higheſt heavens is not intended, as many have thought, is evident from the deſcent of the city from God out of heaven, and from the grand object of that deſcent, God's dwelling with men, the healing of the nations, and the copious effuſion of divine influences, compared to a river of the water of life, the rainbow about the throne, the gates open continually, the wiping away tears, &c. all denoting the nature of the ſaving work to be then performed. That the New Teſtament church at large is not intended, as ſome have thought, who do not know what to make of this concluding viſion, might be argued from a number of things in the deſcription, could I tarry to examine them. Let one ſuffice. In the ordinary ſtate of the church, one door only is ſaid to be

* Some have juſter views of the nature and extent of our Lord's mediation, than others who are reputed much more pious and orthodox, and enjoy greater advantages. The people of Samaria diſcovered a much more noble ſpirit towards our Lord than his own people the Jews.—One of them ſaid, "I know that Meſſias cometh, who is called Chriſt; when he is come he will tell us all things," John iv. 25. And others, "We know that this is the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world." When his own people, the ſeed of Abraham, rejected his inſtructions, denied his divine miſſion, and would not admit that their Meſſiah was to be the ſaviour of the Gentiles, as Chriſtians now will not bear he ſhould ever reſtore the wretched outcaſts of the land of Nod, who are marked with Cain's doom. In this reſpect the very beſt of the Jews erred, and hence were greater enemies to the truth of the goſpel than the poor Samaritans. Similar things take place ſtill.

ſet open for ſinners; "Behold I have ſet before thee an open door." But this city is ſaid to have twelve gates open continually, intimating the vaſt reſort unto it, as far exceeding any thing that took place before, as twelve glorious gates exceed one door.—Thus we are conſtrained to ſeek the period of the New Jeruſalem, the reſt that remaineth for the people of God, in ſome glorious ſtate beyond the diſmal age of puniſhment in the lake of fire, to relieve from which ſeems to be the grand end of its deſcent, and continuance ſo long with men. This age will exceed all that ſhall go before it, in glory and duration, as far as the Jubilee exceeded all the reſt of the Moſaic feſtivals. This is the *for ever and ever*, or *age of ages*, during which the ſaints are to reign with Chriſt as kings and prieſts; for they cannot be ſuppoſed to reign with him after his own mediatory reign is ſwallowed up in the Father's reign of abſolute love.

I thought to have diſcuſſed what I intended on this ſubject with this letter, but find I cannot. Before I conclude it, permit me to ſuggeſt a thought which lately occurred to my mind, when muſing on a paſſage of ſcripture, and gave no ſmall pleaſure. The thought is connected with the preceding remarks.—For what purpoſe is the church of the firſt-born repreſented in the very laſt viſion in the book of the Revelation as coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband, Rev. xxi. 2. At a much earlier period the marriage of the Lamb is ſaid to have come, and his wife to have made herſelf ready; and at the 9th verſe one of the ſeven angels, who had the ſeven vials full of the ſeven laſt plagues, invites John, ſaying, "Come hither, I will ſhew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." I was indebted to the doctrine of the reſtoration for a ſolution, when I could find none upon the common ſyſtem. If the new earth, ſo very different from the old, that righteouſneſs ſhall dwell in it as its native and perpetual ſeat, is to be then peopled with the ſecond-born, the prodigals that have ſo long been wretched and beſide themſelves in the far country, and by means of the firſt-born, who are now made kings and prieſts to God, then the bleſſing pronounced by Jehovah upon Adam in his ſtate of innocence, who was a type of Meſſiah, and upon Eve, who typified the church taken from his ſide, to which ſhe is to be yet reſtored, will juſtly apply: "God created man in his own image, male and female created he them. And God bleſſed them, and God ſaid unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth, and ſubdue it: and have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," Gen. i. 27, 28. According to the doctrine of the reſtoration, the church of the Redeemed will then receive a ſimilar commiſſion and bleſſing, with regard to thoſe who are to repleniſh the new earth, in begetting whom to God, as prieſts, by the goſpel, and in forming them for his glory, as kings, they are ſuppoſed to be inſtrumental. Then, and not till then, will that prophecy of Daniel be fulfilled; "But the ſaints of the Moſt High ſhall take the kingdom, and poſſeſs the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever;—and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High, whoſe kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and all dominions ſhall ſerve and obey him," or *all rulers*, as on the margin, Dan. vii. 18,—27. *The phraſes* here uſed evidently ſhew, that the dominion intend-

ed cannot be limited to the millenium, as is generally done; for it is even *for the age of ages*, and to comprehend the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, one univerſal divine government under Chriſt its head. But where ſhall the ſaints poſſeſs this, if not in the new earth, which the meek ſhall inherit, and in which righteouſneſs ſhall dwell. Thus the dominion ſhall be reſtored to the firſt-born, to whom their brethren ſhall be ſubjected during the age of ages; for "the upright ſhall have dominion over them in the morning," Pſal. xlix. 14. Then ſhall the firſt words of that Pſalm be realized, "Hear this, all ye people, give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world."

Such as will not examine theſe things, or cannot receive them, let them beware of raſh judgment, and uncharitable cenſures. Inſtead of railing at thoſe who love truth as much as they do, and are as anxious to diſcover it, and loading them with odious epithets, a too common practice, let them ſhew their wiſdom, by ſolving, with meekneſs and fear, the difficulties that occur on the common ſyſtem, and then will they deſerve the cordial thanks of every true humble inquirer after truth, of whom your correſpondent preſumes to call himſelf one. Such things led Paul to ſolicit an intereſt in the prayers of Chriſtians, "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith," whatever pretenſions they may make to it, 2 Theſſ. iii. 1, 2. There are ſome, of whom we would charitably hope, that they have faith, who are in ſome things very *unreaſonable*, or, as the margin renders it, *abſurd*.

Wiſhing you, and all others cordially engaged in the cauſe of our common Chriſtianity, much ſucceſs in every laudable effort, and that theſe may be ſucceſsfully employed to unite all the friends of truth, in their zeal and exertions only againſt its common enemies, a zeal proceeding from knowledge, and actuated by that charity which thinketh no evil,

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Cordially yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.—For vain man would be wiſe, though man be born like a wild aſſes colt.—The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men.—The ſluggard is wiſer in his own conceit, than ſeven men that can render a reaſon.—The glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed, and all *fleſh ſhall ſee it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.—The word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever.* Pſal. xciv. 11. Job. xi. 12. 1 Cor. i. 25. Prov. xxvi. 16. Iſa. xl. 5,—8.

Dear Sir,

SEVERAL inſtances occur in Scripture of the beſt of men remaining for a time ignorant of, and prejudiced againſt ſome of the plaineſt and moſt important truths. The diſciples were filled with indignation at the woman who anointed *their Maſter with* the precious ſpikenard, counting it profuſion and waſte. The *opening of the box* of ointment diffuſed however a ſweet odour throughout the

houſe, and our Lord deemed the application of it on the occaſion as an anointing of himſelf againſt his burial. The box of ointment was no unapt figure of divine truth, the opening of which does ſo much honour to Chriſt, and ſerves to anoint and perfume his myſtical body, though it ſhould excite the indignation of diſciples. Better have the box opened even by a woman, than that it ſhould remain ſhut. Theſe things are written that we ſhould not pay more deference to men, even the beſt of men, than is meet, or be deterred, by their clamours and indignation, from ſearching the ſcriptures of truth, that land of promiſe, following the Lord fully in the report we make of their contents. If we have a ſingle eye to his glory, and the triumph of his truth, we may reſt aſſured he will defend us from all the reproaches and indignation of diſciples, as he did Mary of old, who piouſly expended her precious ointment in anointing him. Would Chriſtians follow the example of their brethren of old, who gave Peter an opportunity of being heard in his own cauſe, and liſtened patiently to his candid defence, before they would draw a concluſion, like them they might find cauſe to rejoice, and bleſs God for the very thing that formerly excited their alarm. This was the good old way, but few now diſcover that they have ſo learned Chriſt.

But ſhall the ſervant expect better treatment than his Maſter? The Son of God was oppoſed in the courſe of his miniſtry, deſpiſed, rejected, and even crucified at length; not through defect of ſufficient evidence of his Meſſiahſhip, the truth of which was abundantly atteſted, but from the abuſe of it; and I feel convinced, that if any reject the Univerſal doctrine, after attending to the report of ſcripture reſpecting it, it muſt be owing to ſome other cauſe than the want of evidence. To the Jews this was the condemnation, that light came into the world, and they choſe to retain their former darkneſs in preference to that light, as many do ſtill. It is not a bad ſign of any doctrine, that, like Chriſt's fan, it ſets the chaff on the floor in motion, and diſcovers the hidden things of the heart; for whatever makes manifeſt is light. Were it of the world, the world, and profeſſors that are conformed to the world, would love their own; but the oppoſition and hatred of ſuch mark a doctrine and cauſe from above.

Our bleſſed Lord gives thanks to his heavenly Father for hiding certain things from the *wiſe and prudent*—ſuch as were too full of themſelves to receive his inſtruction, and employed their wiſdom and prudence to oppoſe and pervert his word; and alſo for revealing them unto *babes*, who deſire and value the ſincere milk of his word, drawn pure from that full breaſt of Zion's conſolation, that they may grow thereby, Mat. xi. 25. While pride, the prejudices of education, carnal reaſoning, and the influence of Scribes and Phariſees, unite in ſwelling and blinding the eyes of theſe wiſe and prudent men, whence they love mutual praiſe, how can they perceive the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, which are too high, out of their reach, and too pure, glorious, and ſimple, to receive their cordial aſſent. But when the myſtical Jews reject the glorious goſpel of the ever-bleſſed God, let his ſervants turn to the Gentiles, who are reputed dogs by the former, and ſhew that he has thoughts of mercy even towards them; for publicans and harlots enter ſooner into the kingdom of heaven, than the ſelf-

important and ſelf-righteous race, who are proud of their ſhewy lamp, and rich and increaſed in goods, in their own blinded eyes. Oh, that men were wiſe! when ſhall it once be?

How remarkable the language of the weeping prophet! "The Lord will not caſt off for ever: But though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly," or *from his heart*, as the margin reads it, "nor grieve the *children of men*. To cruſh under his feet all the priſoners of the earth," Lam. iii. 31,—34. Here we have a general declaration, worthy of the Father of the Spirits of all fleſh, and to reſtrict it to the faithful in ancient Iſrael, who made but a ſmall number of the people to whom the prophet was ſent, or to the elect in any age, would be to do violence to the language of the Holy Spirit. So far from caſting them off for ever, the Lord never caſts off his people. But the Lord caſts off fooliſh virgins, formaliſts, the ignorant, hypocritical, and profane, at death; yet not *for ever*, but *for the age*, becauſe he means then to gather them with loving kindneſs and with tender mercies. Thus the willing and obedient are not cut off at all; and tho' the reſt are cut off, yet is it not for ever, as it is meant to reſtore them.

Can any phraſe be more general and comprehenſive than the *children of men?* a phraſe never applied to the church of the firſt-born, who have the honourable character of the *ſons and children of God.* But does not the popular doctrine maintain, that God will caſt off millions of the children of men for ever; yea, all of them, as diſtinguiſhed from his own children? Does it not hold forth, that where he cauſes the greateſt grief he will have no compaſſion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies; which are ſuppoſed to become, to the ſinner at death, a ſpring and fountain for ever ſhut up and ſealed? Real Chriſtians or believers, in whatever ſtate we can conceive them in this world, can, with no propriety, be called *the priſoners of the earth*; for whom the Son makes free, they are free indeed, ſo that ſuch are entirely out of the queſtion. Yet we are told that God will eternally cruſh under his feet *all* the priſoners of the earth; all mankind but his own choſen people. How can it be ſaid that he does not afflict *any* willingly, or *from his heart*, when he is repreſented as tormenting all the damned, without the leaſt compaſſion, world without end? Would he not be aſhamed to be called their Father, as he often calls himſelf in his word, if he did not provide far other and better things for them, to the enjoyment of which their puniſhment ſhall be made preparatory?

Can it be proved, that a wiſe and beneficent father acts out of character in expreſſing pity for his rebellious offspring, under the very miſeries that their own follies have brought upon them? Nay, if he declined this, and ſhut up his bowels of compaſſion in inexorable wrath, would he be thought either wiſe or beneficent? It is worthy of him, who is the rock of Iſrael, and changeth not, at one time or other, to addreſs his miſerable creatures, Ye have deſtroyed yourſelves, but in me is your help to be found. Sooner ſhall a mother forget her ſucking child, than he forget his people, many of whom refuſe to hearken to his voice *in this life*, Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 13. What the Lord has done times paſt number, he *may and will do; for he is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.* Who may ſay *to him, in his living work*, Hitherto ſhall it come, even to the gates of death,

but no farther, and here shall all its exertions be stayed? Before we seal up the bowels of the Divine compassion, never more to be opened, and shut the gates of mercy upon mankind, we should be very well assured that we have authority from above. One single text of scripture, more than once referred to, did its authority duly weigh with us, would settle this point for ever; "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," Psal. cxlv. 9. Will a period come when this text shall not be true? The Lord is good only to elect angels and saints, and his tender mercies are over only part of his works:—The common doctrine requires it should be so qualified; but God's words are so pure and irreversible as to admit of no such change. The scripture cannot be broken, John x. 35. and the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

But if future misery be endless, the above texts cannot be true; for what has mercy to do with helpless wretches, and their punishment, who are doomed to never-ceasing destruction and despair? Such a scripture must then be broken, and cannot endure for ever. Let God, however, be true, and all the wise men of Gotham in the world found liars, when they presume to differ from him; for we have his own authority for asserting, that *his tender mercies*, even those of a kind and pitiful-hearted Father, shall be over the prisoners of Tophet, and the punishment to be inflicted on them, till mercy shall rejoice and triumph against or over judgment. Thus they may receive judgment without mercy, as James speaks, at the great decisive day, and yet mercy find abundant scope before Christ finish his glorious process in making all things new. The time may come, when the prisoners of the pit in which there is no water shall adopt the language of the church, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not," Lam. iii. 22.; and of the Psalmist, "*We* shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened *us* sore, but he hath not given *us* over," as we have dreaded, and been so often told, to the endless power of the second death: "For thou hast delivered *our* soul from death, *our* eyes from tears, and *our* feet from falling," Psal. cxviii. 17, 18. & cxvi. 8.

It becomes us to be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful. If assured that he entertains pity for any, and causes his mercy to spread her benign wings over them, why should we deny our commiseration, like peevish Jonah, who felt hurt at the mercy extended to the Ninevites? It is God-like to wish the happiness of all. Who put into Paul's heart so cordially to seek the salvation of his countrymen, and to travail as in birth till Christ should be formed in them the hope of glory? Who disposed Moses to intercede so powerfully for the people, as to beg his life might be taken rather than theirs, tho' offered to be made the father of a great nation? Do the streams rise higher than the fountain? It is to be lamented, that mankind in general are prone to think so highly of themselves, but too meanly of their Maker, as if he were but an unlike master, and but a half-merciful father. Were a neighbour to charge any father amongst them with what they daily ascribe, without scruple, to the best of all fathers, their resentment would burn, and they would reply, Is thy servant a dog, that he should do such a thing? When the mind dwells on the common doctrine and *its concomitants and native consequences*, one cannot help, at least I can

deteſting it as antichriſtian and diabolic, and feeling pity for thoſe who are ſo tenacious of it as to liſten to no argument, and to father the groſſeſt abſurdities on the word of truth, and its divine Author, rather than once think of giving it up. Such firm hold do religious prejudices take of the human heart, eſpecially when ſupported by the regular clergy, that our Lord himſelf, who ſpoke as never man ſpake, reclaimed few in his day from their rooted attachment to their old ſyſtem. And in our own day, did an angel deſcend from heaven, he would not be liſtened to by many, if he did not move in the beaten tract; ſo great is the power of prejudice and cuſtom!

The Pſalmiſt tells us, that the compaſſions of our heavenly Father fail not, and aſſigns this as the reaſon of the deliverances he works for the miſerable. The popular ſyſtem ſays, that his compaſſions ſhall fail with regard to every impenitent ſinner at death, and will work deliverance for none beyond the grave, be they ever ſo wretched. What can we think of that ſyſtem which ſo often gives the direct lie to God's word, and yet fathers itſelf upon him, and the oppoſite on the devil? In convicting it of falſehood I ſtrain no nerve, wreſt no ſcripture expreſſion;—he that runs may read it.

The Pſalmiſt ſays, in a pſalm that is ſaid to be for Solomon, "Lo children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb his reward," Pſal. cxxvii. 3. In the Bible before me, in the reference to this verſe in the contents, I find, "Good children are God's gift;" but is there any ſuch reſtriction in the text? The aſſertion is general, and none has a right to limit it; the unhallowed liberty ſo often taken with the ſcriptures, but without which, however, the ſyſtem of many would fall to the ground. Is not God the former of all, and does he not claim all ſouls as his? Are they not all on a level, viewed as his workmanſhip? and are they not alſo on a level, conſidered as involved in the effects of the general apoſtacy? Is it as forming them anew that he claims them as his heritage and reward; or in virtue of their original formation? Surely the latter. How hard do ſome ſtrain to evade plain truth, that needs none of their comments to make it intelligible? The Pſalmiſt tells us, "The Lord will not caſt off his people, neither will he forſake his inheritance," Pſal. xciv. 14. Tho' the elect are his peculiar inheritance, yet he claims an intereſt in all men, and Chriſt is appointed to be heir of them all; whence we are juſtified in maintaining, that he will not caſt them off nor forſake them for ever; and this cannot be denied but at the expence of contradicting the above expreſs declaration.

I have all along avoided, and wiſh always to avoid, the too common practice of quoting a text of ſcripture only to ſupport a previous train of reaſoning of our own, thus making the word of truth ſpeak what language we pleaſe. The oppoſite courſe would I follow, endeavouring to found my remarks on the word, and not the word on my remarks. James tells us, that "men are made after the ſimilitude of God," without excepting any; and certainly this muſt hold true in one ſenſe or other, James iii. 9. This is one reaſon why he ſhould claim property in them as his inheritance. Now, I would beg leave to aſk, Does he reſign his right in this heritage, when children come to years? or *relinquiſh it entirely* at death, if they die impenitent, and that in favour of his *greateſt adverſary the devil*, to be retained for ever as his own poſſeſſion?

He is of one mind, and who or what can turn him? Admitting the reſtoration, we ſee that though this heritage ſhould remain long over-run with briers, and thorns, and every noxious weed, and the boar from the foreſt be permitted to ravage it at pleaſure: yet the great Huſbandman will aſſert his property in it, drive thence every beaſt of prey, and ſanctify and ſet it apart for himſelf, that it may ſhew forth his glory. Such a work is worthy of himſelf, and it is ſtrange any of his people ſhould repine at his reaping the glory of it. Rather let us pray, as taught by the Spirit, "Let every thing that hath breath praiſe the Lord," Pſal. cl. 6. which they doubtleſs will; ſuch a form of expreſſion being equivalent to a prediction, and capable of being ſo rendered.

Daniel ſpeaks of the cutting off of Meſſiah, as the means of finiſhing tranſgreſſion, making *an end* of ſin, and making reconciliation for iniquity, Dan. ix. 24, 26. When we elſewhere read, that he taſted death for *every man*, died for the ſins of the *whole world*, or is a propitiation for them, which is ſtill ſtronger, gave his life a ranſom for *all*, and, as the Lamb of God, takes away the ſins of the *world*, are we not juſtified, if not conſtrained to underſtand the prophet in the moſt unlimited ſenſe, though this ſhould not comport with received ſyſtems? Thus underſtood, the death and mediation of Chriſt will prove the mean at length of totally removing the effects of tranſgreſſion and ſin in general, when theſe ſhall no longer ſeparate betwixt the offenders and their God, the reconciliation being completely effected on their ſide as well as his.

The prophet Iſaiah ſpeaks in ſimilar language. He tells us, that Jehovah hath laid on Meſſiah the iniquity of *us all*, even of *all we*, who, like loſt ſheep, had gone aſtray, chap. liii. It is alſo foretold, that, as God's righteous ſervant, he ſhall juſtify *many*, or *the many*, in conſequence of having borne their iniquities. Is it not natural to underſtaned *the many* here, as denoting thoſe whom the apoſtle deſcribes by the ſame term, as made ſinners by the diſobedience of one, and it is probobly Paul had in his eye the language of the prophet. Thus we ſee for whom our Lord endured all theſe ſufferings, mentioned in that chapter, and the prophet ſurely did not mean to limit their bleſſed effects, by including himſelf. To confine the whole to the elect, as is uſually done, is reſtricting the import of ſcripture, not only without neceſſity, but even in the face of the moſt general and unequivocal phraſes. How gloomy the thought, that tranſgreſſion and ſin ſhould continue, and increaſe in number and puniſhment for ever, and that unknown millions of intelligent beings, capable of holineſs and happineſs, ſhould remain, throughout all eternity, unreconciled to the great Author of their exiſtence, and he and they at eternal variance! But how conſoling, and worthy of God, that doctrine which repreſents him as overcoming all evil with his goodneſs, and rendering his miſerable creatures happy at length, though in a ſubordinate degree! Is it not God's prerogative and glory, as the prophet ſpeaks, to pardon iniquity, and paſs by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage, even that part of it which is not ſaved in the preſent life; becauſe he retaineth not his anger for ever, ſeeing he delighteth in mercy? Mic. vii. 18. Viewing God's character in this light, the prophet exclaims with wonder and joy, Who is a God *like thee?* But the common doctrine, and its abettors, *divest him of* the exerciſe of this prerogative, and of the glory reſult

ing from that exerciſe, with regard to every impenitent individual at death, and to the whole collective body to all eternity, declaring that he will pardon none of their iniquities, and paſs by none of their tranſgreſſions, though they be the remnant of his heritage; but retain his anger for ever, and take no delight in mercy with reſpect to them! Thus, inſtead of repreſenting him as a God to whom there is none like, they aſſimilate him to the moſt malignant of the heathen deities, implacable in his reſentment, inexorable in his wrath, and that againſt his own offspring! But this is not the God who made heaven and earth, the Father of mercies, in whom compaſſions flow; but an idol of their own framing, to whom, like Baal's prieſts of old, too many of them bawl out and make a noiſe, cutting others, if not themſelves, with ſtones and with lances.

God is ſaid in his word to be ſlow to anger, but the common doctrine repreſents him as very ſlow in putting it off, nay, as retaining burning anger as long as he ſhall exiſt. His word tells us, that he afflicts *none willingly*, or *from the heart*, as in the original, which ſurely may be extended to the greateſt of all afflictions, the affliction of a future ſtate. Does he uſe a phraſe that includes all, and ſhall we boldly except? Anger is only a maſk on God's face, which he will not wear always in the preſence of any of his children. The wiſe man tells us, that anger reſteth in the boſom of fools, Eccl. vii. 9.; and would it not then be blaſphemy to ſuppoſe, that anger againſt any part of his creation, ſhall, through all duration, reſt in the boſom of God, and burn againſt his offſpring in devouring flames that ſhall not be quenched? Does he contradict his word in his own conduct; or incur his own charge?

Paul tells us, that he and his brethren both laboured and ſuffered reproach, becauſe they truſted in the living God, who is the Saviour of *all men*, though eſpecially of thoſe that believe, becauſe they taſte not of the ſecond death, and ſhall be ſaved, as the true Iſrael, in the Lord Jeſus with an everlaſting ſalvation, or the age-laſting ſalvation of the New Jeruſalem ſtate, in which the other ſhall have no ſhare. Theſe things Paul enjoins Timothy to command and teach, as a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, though this ſhould coſt him labour, or pain and ſuffering, 1 Tim. iv. 9, 10. Let us not think it ſtrange ſhould the ſame doctrine produce the ſame effects ſtill.

The apoſtle James ſpeaks in the ſame general terms, "If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to *all men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him," James i. 5. If ſo few poſſeſs this wiſdom, the reaſon is, becauſe ſo few aſk it, or if they do, receive it not, becauſe they aſk it amiſs. But will God never bring *all* men to aſk it in earneſt, and give it to all liberally? So we are told by men, but the word of truth ſeems to give a very different report.

In the 18th verſe, he ſpeaks of real Chriſtians as a kind of *firſt-fruits* of God's creatures. The grace given them, which is called *the firſt-fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 23. is not only an earneſt of their future glory, but alſo of the grace to be given to the reſt of mankind at the reſtoration. Does not this beſpeak *ſome mercy* to them, as the ſecond-fruits, or the full harveſt? Does it not make *the ſalvation of the ſaints* a pledge and earneſt of the delivery of the *whole crea-*

tion, or *every creature*, from the bondage of corruption, to partake, in their meaſure, in the glorious liberty of God's children, Rom. viii. Let ſuch as call the truth of this in queſtion, go and learn what the firſt-fruits mean, by conſulting Lev. xxiii. 10, 11, &c. The prieſt that preſented the offering of the firſt-fruits, ſhook it before the Lord towards the four quarters of the world, intimating the vaſt extent and comprehenſive nature of the general harveſt ſo prefigured, as including all nations, and indeed the whole world, in the moſt ample ſenſe. Says Cruden, in his Concordance, ſpeaking of this oblation, "This was offered in the name of the whole nation, and by this the whole harveſt was ſanctified unto them." If the ſaints, therefore, are *a kind of firſt-fruits of God's creatures*, which they are declared to be, then his poſſeſſing or enjoying them as the firſt produce of his heritage, ſanctifies unto him the reſt of his creatures. This is fair reaſoning from ſcripture premiſes; and how worthy the concluſion of God, and conſonant to his truth, compared to that ſyſtem which burſts aſunder the eſtabliſhed connection betwixt the firſt-fruits and the full harveſt, the ſaints and the reſt of God's creatures, giving the intelligent part of the latter wholly to the devil, as not only his permitted, but divinely predeſtinated everlaſting prey; though they are all ſanctified and ſet apart for the great Author of their exiſtence in the firſt-fruits, the elect church of the firſt-born! How long ſhall we give heed to gloomy fables, which father themſelves when examined, diſmal tales of endleſs torture and wo, that contradict the whole ſcope and tendency of divine truth. Is our Redeemer expreſsly called *the Lord of the harveſt*, to whom it pertains no leſs than the firſt-fruits, and ſhall he not aſſert his property in the one as well as the other? Let us beware how we go about to rob him of any part of his patrimony.

The Lord ſaith, with regard to the Jews, "O daughter of the Chaldeans, I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didſt ſhew them no mercy!" Iſa. xlvii. 5, 6. This will apply to all with whom he is wroth. Having pollutted themſelves by their ſins, and refuſed to be healed and cleanſed, God juſtly polluted them with his judgments, by which many of them periſhed, and thoſe that ſurvived were for a time made very miſerable. Yet it is evident that he retained favour for them, by calling them *his* people, and *his* inheritance, and threatening their enemies for treating them ſo cruelly. The unbelieving and impenitent part of the Jewiſh nation, which indeed conſtituted the bulk of it, were a type of the finally impenitent part of mankind at large, both in their puniſhment, and alſo in the claim aſſerted in them, and favour expreſſed for them. But we are juſtified in ſaying, that had not God provided better things, to be enjoyed at length, for both, than what they poſſeſs on earth, he would be aſhamed to claim them as his people and inheritance.

The Lord upbraideth the Jews, ver. 10. "For thou haſt truſted in thy wickedneſs: Thy wiſdom and thy knowledge it hath perverted thee;" and many are ſtill perverted, from the path of truth and duty, by the ſame means. He that truſteth to his own underſtanding, or the underſtanding of any of his fellow-creatures, be they ever ſo wiſe and prudent, in preference to the word of God, *is a fool, and the event* will ſhew him to have been ſuch. This, how

ever, was, alas! the ruling evil among the Jews, which brought on them much miſery; and profeſſed Chriſtians in general make ſhipwreck of the faith of the goſpel, and of a good conſcience, upon the ſame rock, and are mightily offended at every one that would warn them of their guilt and danger. There is no help for it, they muſt be left to God, to convince them by his judgments, if nothing elſe will convince.

In examining the 7th and the 14th chapters of the book of the Revelation, I cannot reconcile the things there recorded to the common ſyſtem. The number of the ſealed ones is mentioned, and theſe are ſaid in the latter chapter, ver. 4. to have been "redeemed from among men, being the firſt-fruits unto God and to the Lamb," characters that belong to the firſt-born, and ſerve to diſtinguiſh the bride, the Lamb's wife, from the reſt of mankind. To them a new ſong is aſcribed, which no man elſe could learn, and they are deſcribed as following the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth. Beſides theſe, John ſaw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtanding before the throne, and before the Lamb, or before the New Jeruſalem, which the throne of God and the Lamb is thought to intend, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to *our* God, who ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," chap. vii. 5, 10. One of the elders, who directed John's attention to theſe in particular, ſaid to him, "Theſe are they who came out of *great tribulation*, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," ver. 14. The current of commentators, with their uſual conſiſtency, makes this great multitude to denote the martyrs and ſufferers in the cauſe of Chriſt; and the great tribulation, the perſecution that ſuch have endured. But the leaſt attention to the paſſage is ſufficient to overturn this gloſs, which makes the martyrs to exceed in number the reſt of the church, beyond all calculation. It alſo ſinks them below ordinary Chriſtians, by excluding them from the number of the ſealed, and alſo from any part in the new ſong, which no man could learn but the ſealed ones. They are mentioned as diſtinct from thoſe "who were redeemed from among men," or ſaved in this life, while others periſh; and alſo as diſtinct from "the firſt-fruits to God and the Lamb," the ſame as the church of the firſt-born. Theſe and other things that might be mentioned, cannot apply to the martyrs; for we muſt not degrade them, as if they are to rank beneath every other order of real Chriſtians, who are repreſented by the ſealed ones. Theſe are ſaid excluſively to follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth; but will we deny the martyrs this honour? It is not uſual in ſcripture to call even perſecution *great tribulation*; for Paul ſpeaks of the ſufferings of Chriſtians in his day, which included many grievous things, as appears from the 11th of the Hebrews, and extended to the effuſion of blood, ſtriving againſt ſin, as light and momentary: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment," &c. 2 Cor. iv. 17. But the glorified elder called the affliction out of which the great multitude came, *great tribulation*, having been ſo long threſhed on God's threſhing-floor, as the derivation of the Engliſh word tribulation denotes. But the original is ſtill more *expreſſive*. The emphatic particle *the* or *that* is repeated, whence it might be *rendered*, "Theſe are they who have come out of that tribulation—that great

tribulation." They are farther deſcribed as a people among whom he that ſits on the throne ſhall dwell, ver. 15. the ſame as in chap. xxi. It is alſo promiſed, that they ſhall neither hunger nor thirſt any more, and that the ſun ſhall not light on them or any heat; all this being part of the tribulation they endured, and correſponding to what we read in the 107th Pſalm, which is thought to refer to the ſame ſubject. How far the ſun may be made a mean of tormenting the wicked in the lake of fire, we cannot tell; but the ſun and heat not lighting farther on them, ſuggeſts this thought. The reaſon aſſigned is, "For the Lamb who is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of waters," proceeding from the river, Rev. xxii. 1.; "and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes." All this correſponds to what is included in making all things new, as explained by our Lord himſelf, chap. xxi. 3, 4.——Theſe are ſome of the reaſons which lead me to believe, that the great multitude, which no man could number, as diſtinguiſhed from the firſt-fruits, or church of the firſt-born, intend the recovered from the puniſhment of the ſecond death. Had they been called by the goſpel on earth, before the day of judgment, they would fall under the deſignation of *the redeemed from among men*, which is peculiarly deſcriptive of the ſealed ones, plainly intimating that their deliverance is of a different nature, and from a very different ſituation.

The great innumerable multitude is ſaid to be made up of *all* nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, agreeable to Jehovah's oath to Abraham, which will by no means apply to the church of the firſt-born, many nations having become extinct without having enjoyed the external means of ſalvation. For the healing or ſalvation of theſe nations, or that great multitude, as diſtinguiſhed from the church of the elect, who ſhall be completely ſaved long before the period of the reſtitution of all things ſhall commence, *the leaves of the tree of life*, or the ordinances of the goſpel, are appointed to be adminiſtered, in the laſt glorious age or diſpenſation of Meſſiah's reign. This will find employment for the conſecrated prieſts to God, who ſhall reign with Chriſt throughout that *age of ages* or that moſt excellent and glorious of all the ages into which his kingdom is divided. I could never yet find an approved commentator that gave a conſiſtent ſenſe of theſe things, and indeed, it is ſeldom of much benefit to conſult them upon difficult paſſages of ſcripture, they oftener obſcuring what is already plain, than elucidating what is dark. It is of conſequence to conſult the parallel paſſage, which John had evidently in his eye, as affording additional light on this ſubject, Iſa. xxv. 6, 7, 8, 9. There it is promiſed, that "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off *all faces*;" and John ſays, "God ſhall wipe away *all tears* from their eyes;" intimating the perfection and unlimited extent of the deliverance. If the wicked have faces, they ſhall ceaſe to ſhed tears; God ſhall wipe away *all tears*.

In reading the parable of the talents in the 25th of Matthew, and of the pounds, in the 19th of Luke, I have been quite at a loſs what to make of the *many things*, and of the *cities*, over which the faithful ſervants are to rule. The difficulty increaſed, when I reflected, that the beſtowing of the recompence referred to the juſt deciſion of the laſt day, when every one ſhall receive according

to his deeds. In vain do we conſult expoſitors for a ſolution of ſuch difficulties; for if that does not ſuit their own ſyſtem, they wrap them up in ſome general expreſſion, that quite conceals or obſcures the meaning of the text. But now, I think, I ſee clearly what our Lord means, by ſaying to him who occupied his five talents into ten; and the other, who occupied his two into four, "Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over *many things*; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," Mat. xxv. 21. In the parable of the pounds in Luke, it is ſaid to one ſervant, "Have thou authority over *ten cities*," and to another, "Have thou authority over *five cities*." This was the reward for improving one pound, a *mina*, which contained fifty ſhekels, or 5 *l.* 14 *s.* into ten pounds, and in the other caſe into five. The queſtion is, Where ſhall we find cities on earth after the day of judgment? But the reſtoration ſolves this difficulty, and makes the ſaints of the Moſt High, during the age of ages, kings or rulers in the new earth over their brethren for their good; without admitting which, many paſſages of ſcripture muſt remain unintelligible. In Rev. v. we find the redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, the kings and prieſts who ſhall reign on the earth, diſtinguiſhed from thoſe deſcribed in the 13th verſe, as *every creature* in heaven, which may intend, as ſome think, the fallen angels, that were once there, and are ſtill ſaid to be in high places, and to have their principality in the air; and *every creature* on the earth, and under the earth, and in the ſea, and *all* that are in them, as joining in a diſtinct ſong of praiſe to God and the Lamb. We muſt refer the accompliſhment of all this to the laſt age of Meſſiah's reign. As the ſeventh day Sabbath is allowed to have been one of the prophetic types of the millenium, ſo the Lord's day, or firſt day of the week, on which Chriſt roſe from the dead, and afterwards entered on his glory, is a figure and pledge of the reſt that remaineth for the people of God in the New Jeruſalem.

In Iſaiah 24th, towards the cloſe, we have a ſolemn deſcription of a terrible ſcene, that applies to the laſt judgment, and cannot be fully realized at any other period. The accompliſhment of the laſt verſe may be referred to a period long ſubſequent, when the Lord of hoſts ſhall reign in Jeruſalem before his ancients glorioufly; or, as the margin renders it, "When there ſhall be glory before his ancients." In that paſſage it is ſaid, "The Lord ſhall puniſh the hoſt of the high ones that are on high," who are ſuppoſed to intend the fallen angels, and alſo "the kings of the earth upon the earth." Theſe are ſaid to be gathered together, like priſoners collected into a pit or dungeon, and to be ſhut up in the priſon. Yet it is added, "after many days ſhall they be viſited." Upon the common ſyſtem ſtrange work is made of all this; for it is difficult to know what its abettors mean to make of it. But admitting the viſitation is to be in mercy, to effect their deliverance from priſon, the only conſiſtent ſenſe that can be given it, and all appears clear and intereſting. Thus we ſee one of our Lord's titles beginning to be delightfully exerciſed, "The bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords," 1 Tim. vi. 15. Can this be a mere *nominal title, as* belonging to him? Will not theſe ſubjects of his ever give him *willing homage, as the kings* of the earth once did to his type Solomon? He is

called the God of theſe gods, and the Lord of theſe lords, and we are exhorted to give him thanks as ſuch, Pſal. cxxxvi. 2, 3. We are expreſsly aſſured, that they will yet own him in this character; "All the kings of the earth ſhall praiſe thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth. Yea, they ſhall ſing in the ways of the Lord; for great is the glory of the Lord," Pſal. cxxxviii. 4, 5. See alſo Iſa. lii. 15. Their recovery to this honour and felicity, imports alſo the recovery of their ſubjects.

John tells us, that our Lords has the above title upon his veſture and upon his thigh, denoting by the former, probably, the honour he does his ſaints, in making them kings and rulers under him over all the kings of the earth that died in unbelief; and by the latter, that his conqueſt over them, and their voluntary ſubjection to him, will be in conſequence of the word of truth, the ſword of the Spirit, that he girds on his thigh, Pſal. xlv. 3. This is admitted above; "They ſhall praiſe thee when they hear the words of thy mouth." That honourable title being on his veſture, may alſo denote, or chiefly intend, that he became ſuch by aſſuming human nature as his prieſtly robes, and conſecrating himſelf to God, by giving his life a ranſom for all; whence he has acquired a right to the love and ſervice of kings and lords, as well as to that of their people.

The effects of the curſe ſhall remain on this earth, till removed by the purifying flames of the general conflagration; but in the new earth, in which ſhall dwell righteouſneſs thro' all duration, they ſhall find no place. Then and there ſhall theſe true and faithful ſayings be fulfilled, "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth," the new earth, "hath he given to *the children of men*," as diſtinguiſhed from the *ſons of God*, the firſt-born, Pſal. cxv. 16.—The purpoſe and grace of God are now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light thro' the goſpel;" ſo that theſe will not be brought fully to light till death of every kind ſhall be aboliſhed, or finally and utterly deſtroyed, 2 Tim. i. 10.

Reading the 48th of Iſaiah, the following paſſage forcibly engaged my attention: "For my name's ſake will I defer mine anger, and for my praiſe will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with, or for ſilver; I have choſen thee *in the furnace of affliction*. For mine own ſake, even for mine own ſake, will I do it; for how ſhould my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another," ver. 9, 10, 11. The preceding part of the chapter ſhews what ſort of people they were for whom he would do all this. Is God ſuch a Being that a reaſon weighs with him to-day, that ſhall have no weight with him ſome ages hence? Does time produce any ſuch change on him? Did he chooſe the Jews in the furnace of affliction, for his own ſake, and that his holy name might not be polluted; and ſhall theſe reaſons have no weight with him in delivering any from the great furnace of the great tribulation beyond the grave? The common doctrine repreſents the wretched captives as there continually curſing and blaſpheming him, and that to his very face; *and in the* preſence of his holy angels; for the wicked are *ſaid to be puniſhed in the* preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence

the Lamb. Will he then have no reſpect to his holy name, or care how much it be polluted, by thus paſſing thro' the lips of theſe polluted veſſels of wrath? Tho' he declares he will not give the glory of ſuch works to another, will he put it out of his own power to execute them in the world to come, by abandoning ſo many of his creatures, as long as he exiſts, to the power and pleaſure of Satan his great rival? Is he not the "God who quickeneth all things," 1 Tim. vi. 13. and ſhall he leave all theſe twice dead for ever? What makes him variable, makes his word alſo ſhift its ground, with every paſſing age and generation, and with every dying breath; very unlike the rock of Iſrael that cannot change or lie.

With ſuch inconſiſtencies does the common ſyſtem charge him, making him variable as the wind in his conduct, and in the principles that influence it. But, feeling ſomething of the power of the apoſtle's exhortation, as applied to the caſe in hand, and of the importance of the reaſon upon which it is founded; and deeming myſelf a ſervant under Chriſt's yoke, I count this my own Maſter worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blaſphemed, 1 Tim. vi. 1. and would invite all his profeſſed ſervants to do the ſame. Let that be owned to be the doctrine according to godlineſs which does *him* moſt honour, and beſt agrees with his word.

We are told that "the Son of *man* is come to ſeek and to ſave *that which was loſt*," Luke xix. 10. Since the time ſin made its entrance, the whole creation has been loſt to God, compared to what it would have otherwiſe been. *The* reſtoration of the whole is intruſted to Chriſt, and could not be truſted to a fitter perſon. Hence ſays John, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given *all things* into his hands," John iii. 35. The ſame apoſtle elſewhere tells us the great end for which they were given into his hands; "And he that ſat upon the throne ſaid, Behold, I make *all things* new," Rev. xxi. 5. Theſe texts ſhew plainly, to what extent Chriſt will ſave or recover that which was loſt.

But the popular ſyſtem ſays, he came to ſeek and ſave only part of what was loſt; and as for that which is loſt in the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, he will never ſeek and ſave, or reſtore the leaſt portion of it. Are all mankind loſt in themſelves? If this muſt be granted, then are we juſtified in ſaying, that the Lord Jeſus came to ſeek and ſave them; which he will doubtleſs do before he finiſh the work aſſigned him. Have we any right to divide and parcel out at diſcretion God's whole, to the entire excluſion of the far greater part of its parts, merely becauſe retaining the aggregate would not ſuit our religious ſyſtem? Where God ſpeaks in terms that equally apply to all mankind, it is preſumptuous in man to limit him, as if he perfectly knew that the thoughts of his heart came far ſhort of what the words of his mouth convey. How would a fellow-creature take it to be ſo uſed? It is but a poor, tho' common ſalvo, to alledge, that the elect being loſt as well as others, they and they only are intended. But hath the Lord himſelf ſaid any ſuch thing? He claims all ſouls as his property; and it is worthy of him to ſeek his own when loſt, tho' thoſe who fancy they are ſafe, ſee not the propriety of this; for we may reſt aſſured, *that he would not give being* to any creature that he deems unworthy of his

care throughout the whole extent of its exiſtence. In him all men live, move, and have their being, and they are all his offspring. Can we then ſuppoſe, the Lord would endue, with a rational immortal ſoul, a being whom he would take no ſteps to recover from his lapſed ruined ſtate? But the popular doctrine repreſents him as ſending millions into the world under an abſolute impoſſibility of ever attaining the great end of their exiſtence, his own glory, in their holineſs and happineſs! It tells us, that he has determined to give grace to none but his elect, a ſpecific number to whom a ſingle individual cannot be added; and that the goſpel, and all the impreſſions produced by it on others, will only aggravate their guilt and miſery; God having decreed never to give them ſpecial grace. And yet you will hear thoſe, who maintain this doctrine, inviting *all* their hearers, without exception, to come to Chriſt, and promiſing them, in his name, a cordial welcome! Can they be ſure they are all elect veſſels? or do they mean to ſport with men in matters of everlaſting moment, pulling down, in their application, what they had been building up in their doctrine? thus expoſing themſelves to the pity and contempt of every attentive intelligent hearer, while the bulk gaze with wonder at their power in exciting ſo many human paſſions! Elect perſons there have been, are, and ſhall be in every generation, who ſhall be exalted with and under Chriſt, to thrones, dominions, and principalities, but not to the total excluſion of the reſt of mankind from any ſpecial favour, either here or hereafter, but rather for their advantage.

If the Lord uſe language, that plainly imports his intention to recover the whole loſt race of man to himſelf, before he terminate his procedure of mercy, let none preſume to refine upon his words, till, inſtead of the whole, by far the leaſt part is left him, as if they grudged him the glory of ſuch an ample acceſſion to his great family, and his creatures the happineſs to which it gave birth. Are God's paternal bowels ſo contracted, that before we venture to believe his plaineſt expreſſions, where the happineſs of mankind is concerned, we muſt narrow and contract them. The art of doing this is, by many, called divinity; and the public ſpeaker that can do it with the beſt grace, and apparent ſcripture-conſiſtency, is generally allowed to be the beſt divine. If God be the Father of all, where is his honour, in allowing him only a very ſmall proportion of his own children or creatures for his inheritance, while the major part is given to his great enemy, Satan, with a liberal hand. Will the great enemy of God and man have always cauſe to boaſt,—

"Divided empire with heaven's King I ho'd."

If all [illegible]ind are God's children or offspring, which Paul admits with reſpect [illegible]e heathen, or idolatrous nations, by quoting a ſaying of one of their poets with approbation, are we not juſtified in applying, in this ſenſe alſo, the words of the Pſalmiſt? "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward." Here there is no exception; and he gives no where reaſon to think, that he will give up his inheritance and reward for ever, to gratify any on earth or in hell. It is a common proverb, *Let every one have his own;* the wicked one ſhall long enough hold unlawful poſſeſſion, tho' Chriſt ſhould be allowed *to deliver* the whole prey from him at length. The father *in the parable, repreſents his* prodigal ſon as not only *loſt*, but alſo dead; a

from both argues the propriety of rejoicing at his recovery, Luke xv. 32. Now, as our Lord came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt, without excluding any part of it from his merciful deſign; ſo we are told, that he quickeneth *whomſoever he will, and all things*, which muſt certainly include all that was loſt. The recovery of one loſt ſon the father deemed ſufficient ground of rejoicing; how much more ſo the recovery or reſtoration of all the loſt prodigals of the family! But the maſs of Chriſtians, like the elder brother, are mightily offended at this, and inſtead of coming cordially in to bear part in the general joy, do all in their power to oppoſe and traduce the occaſion of it, wreſting and explaining away their Father's words, to find ſome ground of accuſing ſuch a liberal exerciſe of his paternal mercy. In the words of the Roman poet may we not ſay,—

In heavenly minds can ſuch baſe paſſions dwell?

As it will be proper to take a ſurvey of the ſubject, and enter a little into the objections uſually urged againſt the view of the truth exhibited in theſe letters, you will permit me to beg leave to trouble you farther, tho' I have treſpaſſed on your patience too much already. Praying we, and all Chriſtians may poſſeſs more of the ſpirit and of the light that is in the great Head, that we may be conformed to him in all things, I am,

Dear Sir,

Your cordial friend, &c.

LETTER X.

Produce your cauſe, ſaith the Lord; bring forth your ſtrong reaſons. Let them bring them forth, and ſhew us what ſhall happen.—He that is of God heareth God's words.—Give inſtruction to a wiſe man, and he will be yet wiſer: teach a juſt man, and he will increaſe in learning.—I alſo will ſhew mine opinion. Let me not accept any man's perſon, neither give flattering titles unto man.—Iſa. xli. 21, 22. John viii. 47. Prov. ix. 9. Job xxxii. 17, 21.

Dear Sir,

IF I am ſo happy as to give you a proper view of divine truth in theſe letters, of which I yet ſee no cauſe to doubt, it becomes me to aſcribe the glory wholly to God, who has, in this reſpect, cauſed me to differ from what I myſelf have ſo long been, and many more worthy men, I doubt not, ſtill are. May not I then apply to myſelf God's words, by the prophet, to his ancient people, "Thou haſt heard, ſee all this; and will not ye declare it? I have ſhewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didſt not know them," Iſa. xlviii. 6. And may not I addreſs the ſame language to ſome who may happen to caſt their eye over theſe pages? If they ſee in them the truth of God, in any important part of it, let them believe it, and not be aſhamed to declare it, as opportunities offer, whatever their ſo doing may coſt them. If they are wiſe, *they ſhall be wiſe for themſelves*: but if they ſcorn this counſel, they alone ſhall *bear it, Prov. xix. 12.*

It is of vaſt conſequence in religion to have proper views of God's character; for to know him aright, in this reſpect, is eternal life, John xvii. 3. Any miſtake here is of a radical nature; and tho' it ſhould appear of ſmall conſequence at firſt ſight; yet, as a little leaven leavens the whole lump, ſo that ſingle miſtake may throw a kind of deadly ſhade, or fatal obſcurity, over our whole religious ſyſtem. When we are well acquainted with a good man's character and views, we may infer, with ſome degree of certainty, that he would not do things utterly abhorrent to theſe. But the beſt of men do not always ſupport their general character, ſo that we may draw wrong concluſions from it. God, however, always does, ſo that we cannot err in making his revealed character the rule by which to judge of his general conduct, that can deviate from it in no inſtance. His character ſolemnly announced to Moſes, was to be his memorial in all generations, Exod. xxxiv. and in that character mercy predominates. He takes to himſelf the title of a Father, even the Father of all in every age—the Father of mercies in whom compaſſions flow; for are we not all his offspring? John twice ſays, *God is love.* Is not God called a Father of the fatherleſs in his holy habitation? Pſal. lxviii. 5. Is not this the very caſe of all men in themſelves? Why then exclude any from ſuch a benefit, without his permiſſion, or in oppoſition to his word?

Thoſe who make the penal evils that exiſt under the adminiſtration of this Father to be partly corrective and partly vindictive, admit this eſſential character only in part, and exclude the far greater part of his miſerable intelligent creatures from any benefit whatever from it; and, to them, the moſt important part of his adminiſtration from the leaſt concern therein. They ſet the Divine character and procedure at irreconcilable and eternal variance. If the miſery of a future ſtate be wholly vindictive to any of God's creatures, or, in other words, proceed not from love, and have no eye to their ultimate good, then God no longer ſuſtains to them the character of a Father, and of the God who is eſſentially love. But his memorial to all ages ſhall be, "Jehovah, merciful and gracious," &c. and therefore can never, in any caſe, be wholly laid aſide. As ſoon will God ceaſe to exiſt, as ceaſe to be love, and to ſuſtain the character of a Father; and ceaſe to be love he muſt, in that part of his adminiſtration which is ſuppoſed to proceed from inexorable, relentleſs, and vindictive wrath; for light and darkneſs are not more oppoſite, than ſuch wrath to God's general and eſſential character. Every act of God is good, in its nature, tendency and conſequences; and the final iſſue of his procedure, with man, will manifeſt it to be ſo. Any doctrine that would diveſt God of his general character, with regard to any number of his creatures, or make him act inconſiſtent with it, in any part of his moral adminiſtration toward them, may, without heſitation, be pronounced falſe and unſcriptural; for God will never deny himſelf, or act in oppoſition to his revealed character. The Rock of Iſrael cannot thus lie.—Will not infinite love, under the unerring direction of unbounded wiſdom, and actuated by almighty power, bring all things at length to participate in its own divine fulneſs? If the little leaven leavens the whole lump, what may this great leaven ultimately effect? Who can *limit* its tranſforming power! The attributes and *word of God muſt, in all reſpects,* harmonize; and that doctrine which goes far

harmonize them, bids fair for being according to godlineſs. May not the Lord complain, that by the common doctrine he is wounded in the houſe of his friends and diveſted of the honour of his paternal character, which he has never yet forfeited? What a pleaſing reflection, to conſider the whole family of air, earth, and ſea, as waiting upon the great Father and Lord of all, expecting when he ſhall open his liberal hand, and diſtribute to each member his portion of meat in due ſeaſon, Pſal. civ. 27, 28. & cxlv. 15, 16. Is not the caſe the ſame with reſpect to intellectual and ſpiritual beings, of which his church and great family in heaven and upon earth are made up? Will not this glory of the mighty Lord endure for ever, whence he ſhall rejoice in all his works?

Since I wrote my laſt, I had acceſs to hear a very excellent ſermon upon the whole, in which the ſpeaker, however, advanced ſome ſtrange paradoxes. Among other things, he told his hearers, that the wicked muſt ſuffer in the next world *all* that an Omnipotent Being can inflict. He is not ſingular in that ſentiment, for others have advanced the ſame; but where find they authority for aſſerting any ſuch thing! Not ſurely in the ſcriptures; for I never could ſee any ſuch thing there. It is evident to a demonſtration, that the being muſt himſelf be almighty, that can bear or ſuffer all that an omnipotent being can inflict. This is ſo obvious, that to mention it is enough. Is not this deifying the creature—making all wicked men and devils in another world ſo many gods, and almighty ones too, and that in order to ſupport and magnify a favourite tenet? What will not even wiſe men ſay, thro' the force of early prejudice, in favour of a received opinion! Did ever a wiſe and humane father ſtir up all his wrath, and exert all his ſtrength, to cruſh under his feet his own offspring, let them be ever ſo contumacious and rebellious? God's paternal character forbids the thought, his word condemns it, humanity recoils at it, and it is fraught with the groſſeſt ſlander and calumny of the goodneſs of our heavenly Father, whoſe tender mercies are over all his works, without exception. We are to believe God rather than men, when they utter high ſwelling words of vanity, that contradict or darken the counſels of heaven by words without knowledge. Almighty power is not exerted to the utmoſt in puniſhing a creature over which, and this puniſhment, tender mercies ſtill preſide.

Another ſentiment, not unfrequently advanced by popular preachers, is, That Chriſt has ſatisfied all the demands of divine juſtice. If ſo, why repreſent it as eternally demanding a ſatisfaction it cannot find; and in order to ſecure that ſatisfaction, inflicting a miſery extreme in its degree, and boundleſs in its duration, without bringing glory to God, or the leaſt advantage to any part of his creation? But if we ſuffer penal evil, both here and hereafter, to reſt upon the ſolid baſis of ſalutary paternal chaſtiſement, we will ſee a benign uniformity running thro' the whole of his adminiſtration, all his perfections glorified to the full in Chriſt, and the greateſt good educed from the greateſt evil, and iſſuing at length in its total deſtruction. This is a ſcheme every way worthy of God, and calculated to give a full diſplay of his nature and glory; whereas the popular ſcheme gives but a partial and confined view of either, and is as hoſtile to the honour of Deity as to the happineſs of mankind.

In Pſalm lxviii. 18. we are told, that upon Meſſiah's aſcenſion he received gifts for *men*; yea, for the *rebellious alſo*, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Here is language that applies to all mankind, and there is nothing in the nature of the caſe, or in the whole Pſalm, to reſtrict it; and indeed, is there any thing more natural than that he ſhould receive gifts, not only for the few, his elect, but alſo for every man, and for the whole world, for whoſe ſins he died? In the 6th verſe he is ſaid to bring out thoſe who are bound with chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. Yet even for theſe he is ſaid to receive gifts, and ſhall he never impart them? Mankind in general have rebelled, but the character of the *rebellious* more peculiarly belongs to thoſe who continue obſtinate to the death. As with ſome it is more difficult to believe that there is any hope for ſuch, it is added, "*yea*, he hath received gifts for the rebellious *alſo*;" and that for the ſame reaſon given at the cloſe of the ſacred canon, "that God the Lord might dwell among them;" Rev. xxi. 3. But here the popular ſyſtem comes in with its uſual modification, and tells us, That Chriſt, when he aſcended up on high, received gifts only for ſome men; and as for thoſe to whom the character of rebellious chiefly belongs, that he received gifts, no, not for a ſingle individual of them.

The general declarations we have in the 30th Pſalm, 5th verſe, muſt be modified in a ſimilar manner, upon the common ſyſtem, to make them truth. "His anger endureth but a moment; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The marginal reading is more ſimple and expreſſive; "There is but a moment in his anger;" or, without the ſupplement, "His anger a moment; weeping may endure in the evening, ſinging in the morning." In the divine plan, light always ſucceeds darkneſs, which is made more welcome from the preceding gloom; but in the boaſted human plan, light is made to ſet in a darkneſs that ſhall never give way to an opening dawn. One excellency of the univerſal doctrine is, that it teaches us to believe God as he ſpeaks, without ſending him to the ſchools of the prophets, as is daily done by many maſters in Iſrael, and thoſe who love to have it ſo, to learn the correct language we have conſecrated for his uſe. It allows God to poſſeſs in perfection, what he himſelf deſcribes as a part of the character of the citizen of Zion, "He ſpeaketh the truth in his heart," Pſal. xv. 2. whereas his heart and lips, (in his words in general, and even in his very oath,) are ſet at eternal variance, and his nature and character alſo at variance with both. Wrath or anger, and the weeping it produces, if at all limited in point of duration, of however long continuance, are but like for a night, or even a moment, when compared to eternity; for wrath cannot apply to any of God's children in this life, as is uſually done when ſuch texts come in courſe, to evade their general meaning; for to them there is no condemnation or wrath. God is ſaid to be angry with the wicked every day.

Happening the other day to caſt my eye over a ſermon of one of the moſt famous preachers of the laſt age, entitled "The Eternity of Hell Torments," the reaſons aſſigned in ſupport of the doctrine, are the texts of ſcripture commonly urged on the head, ſome of which have been ſince relinquiſhed as proofs by ſeveral of the moſt eminent advocates for that cauſe. It is eaſy to make

theſe appear very formidable to a mere Engliſh reader, who has not yet ſearched the ſcriptures for himſelf; but like every work of man, which our tranſlation in ſuch caſes, or the gloſſes put upon it, wholly is, the more they are examined in the light of truth itſelf, the leſs formidable will they appear. Among other arguments equally unfounded, this is one upon which he lays principal ſtreſs, as a baſis for the whole: "There cannot be one circumſtance urged why God ſhould reward his ſaints with everlaſting happineſs, which will not equally prove that he ought to puniſh ſinners with eternal miſery." Here I muſt beg leave to differ; for many arguments can be urged for the former, that can find no place if applied to the latter. Pray, what motive, worthy of a wiſe father, could induce God to cut off the being or happineſs of children that perfectly love and ſerve him? But is it no motive, worthy of ſuch a Father, ſo to adjuſt the ſeverity of paternal diſcipline, as to bring his rebellious ſubjects to a due ſenſe of their criminal conduct, and to act worthy of the relation which he ſuſtains to them as a common parent, that he may at length, as ſuch, bleſs them, according to his original deſign in giving them exiſtence? In the preſent ſtate of things we ſee him daily doing this; and whatever he has done, he may alſo conſiſtently do, whenever it pleaſeth him. But no inſtance of the other has occurred, or ever will occur, under the divine adminiſtration.

Let us apply the above reaſoning to an earthly parent, and hear how it would ſound. No argument can be urged why he ſhould continue to love and lead thoſe of his children that are loving and obedient, ſo long as he and they exiſt together, but will equally prove that he ought to puniſh the reſt with relentleſs indignation to the very day of their death. Would this be acting in character, eſpecially when a different conduct might ſubdue their rebellious ſpirits into love and obedience? Let us not impute any ſuch thing to God, in any part of his adminiſtration.

But were not even the ſaints once rebellious, as well as others, when the great and good Father of all made them to differ? May he not then do the ſame to other wicked rebellious children, when it ſeemeth good in his ſight? Let not the eye of any be evil, becauſe he is good; nor let us preſume to limit the thrice Holy One of Iſrael, where he hath not limited himſelf. What pleaſeth him ſhould pleaſe us alſo. Let not ſaints forget, as they are too apt to do, that they alſo were once rebels in common with others, even thoſe whom they would not number with the dogs of their flock; and that the very mercy which took hold of them in that ſituation, may apprehend others in any ſuppoſeable caſe; for Chriſt is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, even to the very cloſe of the laſt age of his reign, and his will is equal to his ability; what many admit in theory, but deny in works. If we who are ſo evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more ſhall our heavenly Father give his holy ſpirit to them that aſk it? He can bring the moſt obſtinate and rebellious of his children to aſk his holy ſpirit with contrite hearts; and hence his oath declares, that every knee ſhall yet bow to him, not only at the laſt judgment, thro' conſtraint, Rom. xiv. 11. but alſo with cordiality at the reſtitution of all things, Phil. ii. 10. Rev. v. 13. The prophet tells us, in the paſſage from which the apoſtles quote, *or which they have* evidently had in view, "all that are incenſed againſt him

all be aſhamed," we have good reaſon to think, with a godly ſhame, Iſa. xlv. 4. and Paul adds, "All things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, 1 Cor. xv. 28. The great maxim of his government, from which he never deviates, is, To reſiſt the proud, but give grace to the humble, or humbled."

The greateſt difficulty with ſome honeſt minds, in receiving the univerſal doctrine, is, how to reconcile it with ſome general declarations of ſcripture. The terms *everlaſting*, and the phraſe *for ever*, and *for ever and ever*, as applied to future miſery, appear to them ſufficient to cut off all hope of any ſuch conſummation of things. Permit me to inſert an extract from Mr Cruden's Concordance, who cannot be ſuſpected of favouring the univerſal doctrine.—"The words *eternal, everlaſting, for ever*, are ſometimes taken for a long time, and are not always to be underſtood ſtrictly; For example, it is ſaid, Gen. xvii. 8. I will give to thee and to thy ſeed the land of Canaan for an *everlaſting* poſſeſſion." And in chap. xiii. 15. "I will give it to thee, and to thy ſeed *for ever;*" that is, for a long ſpace of time. And in Gen. xix. 26. we find *everlaſting hills*, ſo called, to denote their antiquity, ſtability, and duration; and this expreſſion is uſed to ſhew the long continuance aud durableneſs of Joſeph's bleſſing. God promiſes a throne to David, an eternal kingdom, a poſterity that will never be extinguiſhed; that is, that his and his ſon's empire will be of very long duration, 2 Sam. vii. 16. 1 Chron. xvii. 14. Thus, thou ſhalt be our guide from this time forth even *for ever;* that is, during our whole life."—But tranſlators have taken a very unwarrantable liberty with the original, when the words that are ſuppoſed to convey the idea of unlimited duration and miſery occur. On this liberty is chiefly built the tremendous fabric of eternal torments. The term that is thought to denote eternity, occurs in the New Teſtament, in its ſubſtantive form, no fewer than ſixty-two times in the plural. Had it no ſingular form this might be accounted for; but it is to be met with ſixty-ſix times in the ſingular. Eternity is one, but if the term in the ſingular denotes eternity, muſt not the plural ſignify eternities? Some of theſe mentioned, both in the Old and New Teſtament, are long ſince paſt, others of them are to come hereafter, yet they are to have an end before Chriſt deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Hence, Pſal. cxlv. 13. "Thy kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom;" in the original Hebrew, and in the Septuagint verſion, "Thy kingdom is the kingdom of *all the ages*." On the margin of ſome of our Bibles, it is alſo ſo rendered. But retain the emphaſis vulgarly annexed to the term, and it would run thus, "Thy kingdom is the kingdom of *all the eternities*." This is the term in the Greek, Heb. i. 2. "God hath in theſe days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the *worlds;*" conſtituted, adjuſted, or arranged in order, *the ages*. How would it ſound to render the clauſe, *made the eternities?* The ſame truth is expreſſed, chap. xi. 3. "Thro' faith we underſtand that the *worlds* were framed," that the *ages* were regulated or arranged, "by the word of God." It would be equally abſurd to render ages here *eternities;* but the ſenſe of the original is quite obſcured in both places, by being rendered *worlds*. If this rendering be juſt, then the quality *derived from the original* term, or what grammarians call the *concrete, will be worldly*. Thus the young man's queſtion in the goſpel, mig

be rendered, "What ſhall I do that I may inherit *worldly* life? The original term might always be rendered *age*; tho' applied to periods of time of very different and unknown duration, yet it no where in itſelf carries with it the idea of endleſs duration. It is an eſtabliſhed rule among grammarians, that no quality can exceed in ſignification the word from which it is derived, as white cannot mean more than whiteneſs, hard, than hardneſs, &c. But in the face of this obvious rule, our tranſlators have taken the liberty to extend the meaning of the quality beyond what the root will bear. Hence our *everlaſting* and *eternal*, mean no more than, *of* or *belonging to the age*, which is *coeval*, or *of like duration with the age*—*age-laſting*.

Such as contend for the eternity of future puniſhment, lay conſiderable ſtreſs on the word employed in the Old Teſtament to expreſs its duration. That word is *gnolam*, or, as ſome read it, *olam*. The term which anſwers to it in the Septuagint, and in the New Teſtament, is *aion*; and, from the common uſe of both in ſcripture, they appear to be of the ſame import. So ſays Parkhurſt, in his Lexicon on the New Teſtament, "*aion* in the LXX. generally anſwers to the Hebrew *gnolam*, which denotes *time hidden* from man, whether indefinite, or finite, whether paſt or future." The compoſition of the word denotes what exiſts without interruption, or breaking off, during its continuance, which is never aſſerted or ſuppoſed to be properly eternal. Hence he tells us, "It denotes *duration*, or *continuance of time*, but with great variety;" yet it is ſo far uniform in its import, as applied to creatures, that tho' it denotes a duration *hidden* or *unknown* to us, till the event declare it, yet not a duration without bounds or limits.—The ſame learned author tells us, that the term in the plural ſeems, in Heb. xi. 3. to denote the *various revolutions* and *grand occurrences* which have happened to this created ſyſtem, including alſo the *ſyſtem or world itſelf*; compare Heb. i. 2. It would be more conformable to the ſtrict and uniform import of the term *aion*, to ſay, that its plural in the above two paſſages, denotes the *ages*, *periods*, or *diviſions of time*, under our Lord's adminiſtration, in which ſuch and ſuch works were to be performed. The wiſe arrangement or ordering of theſe ages, and the execution of the works annexed to each, was wholly entruſted to Chriſt, as the apoſtle informs us.

I find the following paſſages ſelected to my hand, in which the Hebrew *gnolam*, ſuppoſed to denote proper eternity, is variouſly rendered in our verſion, yet ſo as to convey no ſuch meaning, even in our own language, except in two inſtances. *Of old*, Gen. vi. 4. 1 Sam. xxvii. 8. Jer. xxviii. 8. Lam. iii. 6. Amos ix. 11. Mic. vii. 14. Mal. iii. 1. Iſa. lxiii. 8. & li. 9.——*Old*, Job xxii. 15. Prov. xxiii. 10. Jer. vi. 16.——*Old time*, Joſh. xxiv. 2. Jer. ii. 20. Ezek. xxvi. 20.—*Ancient times*, *gnolamim*, Pſal. lxxvii. 5.—*Ancient*, Prov. xxii. 28. Iſa. xliv. 7. Jer. v. 15. Ezek. xxxvi. 2.—*World*, Pſal. lxxiii. 12. Eccl. iii. 11. Iſa. lxiv. 4.——*Long*, Pſal. cxliii. 3——*Long time*, Iſa. xlii. 14.——*At any time*, Lev. xxv. 32.——*Continuance*, Iſa. lxiv. 5.——*Everlaſting*, Gen. xvii. 18.——chap. xlviii. 3, 4. & xlix. 26.——chap. xvii. 13. Exod. xl. 15. Lev. xvi. 34. Num. xxvi. 12, 13.——*Laſting*, Deut. xxxii. 15.——*Ever*, Exod. xxvii. 21. *Pſal. xxix. 9.* Lev. vii. 34.——xvi. 29, 31. Num. x. 8. Pſal. xxix. 10.—*Perpetual*,

Exod. xxix. 9. Lev. iii. 17. Num xix. 21.—*Hid*, *hidden*, Lev. v. 2, 3, 4. Num. v. 13. 1 Kings x. 3.——*Secret*, Pſal. xc. 8. Eccl. xii. 14.——*Eternal*, Iſa. lx. 15.——*Always*, Job vii. 16.

Theſe inſtances are ſurely ſufficient to ſhew, that the Hebrew term, *gnolam*, and its correſpondent in Greek, *aion*, do not neceſſarily convey the idea of endleſs duration. No reaſon can perhaps be aſſigned why the word may not be underſtood in a limited ſenſe, wherever it conveys the idea of duration; for tho' it be applied to God, Father, Son, and Spirit, it is not to denote the eternity of his exiſtence, but to point out ſome property of his adminiſtration or agency.

When original languages borrow words from thoſe that are ſtill more ancient, the ſenſe which they annex to them may lead to their primary acceptation. It is evident that the Romans borrowed their adverb *olim* from the Hebrew noun *nolam*, or *olam*; for they agree both in ſound and meaning. Let me adduce two inſtances of the uſe of it from their claſſics. It occurs in the following lines of Horace:——

"Nec quod avus tibi maternus fuit atque paternus,
"Olim qui magnis legionibus imperitarint," &c. Sat. vi.

"And tho' you have anceſtors, by the father's and mother's ſide, who have commanded, *in times paſt*, mighty armies," &c.

An inſtance occurs alſo in Virgil, tho' I cannot recollect the place, where it has reſpect to future time.

"Meminiſſe hæc *olim* juvabit."

"The recollection of theſe things will yield pleaſure *hereafter*."

How the ſame word ſhould come to denote the paſt and the future, may be thus accounted for: When a period, once future, is elapſed, it may ſtill retain its former name, which may thus be uſed to denote a portion of time, either paſt or to come. The ſame thing holds, with regard to the uſe of the Hebrew and Greek terms.

In obſervations ſubjoined to a late verſion of the New Teſtament, I find the following calculation: "The word *aion*, age, as a ſubſtantive, occurs 128 times in the Greek Teſtament. In our common tranſlation it is rendered 72 times *ever*, twice *eternal*, 36 times *world*, 7 times *never*, 3 times *evermore*, twice *worlds*, twice *ages*, once *courſe*, once *world without end*, and twice it is paſſed over without any word affixed as a tranſlation of it." By this management, the ſingular and plural are confounded, and no diſtinction is made between the adjective and the ſubſtantive; two things always neceſſary to be attended to in a tranſlation.

The word *aionios*, derived from it, occurs as an adjective 71 times. The common tranſlation has rendered it once *ever*, 42 times *eternal*, 3 times *world*, 25 times *everlaſting*; in Rom. xvi. 25. *former ages*.—An attentive reader of the New Teſtament will obſerve, that there are different ages there mentioned, as in Col. i. 26. *former ages*; Mat. xii. 32. the *preſent age*, the *age to come*, Mark x. 30. the *age to come*, the *future age*; Eph. ii. 7. ages to come; Mat. xxviii. 20. the *end of the world*, the *cloſe of the age*; 1 Cor. x. 11. the ends of the *ages*; all which clearly prove that none of theſe ages can mean eternity,

that to graft the words *everlaſting*, *eternal*, upon a term of ſuch limited import, is to make the ſtream infinitely more copious than the fountain.

Let any one then ſay, if ſuch various renderings of a term or phraſe, ſo fixed and uniform in its meaning, can be called, with any propriety, the language of the Divine Spirit? Is not ſuch liberty of interpretation an adding to God's word? and does he not threaten to reprove thoſe who are guilty of this, and ſo find them liars? "The lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever," Prov. xii. 19. Can it then be diſpleaſing to God, or give juſt ground of offence to men, to attempt, by means of Chriſt's own fan, to ſeparate ſuch human chaff from the clean wheat of the word? It did not ſuit the views of the tranſlators, it would appear, to give a juſt and literal verſion of ſuch terms and phraſes; nor does it ſuit the views of the expounders of ſcripture in general, leſt a favourite doctrine ſhould be overthrown. Much intereſt has ſomehow been felt, in keeping thoſe who are deemed the vulgar, in certain caſes, in the dark; that by the pious figment of eternal miſery, (in which light ſome view it who ſtill preach it,) they may be kept in awe, who are ſuppoſed to be proof againſt nobler motives: as if this could be more effectual to reform mankind than the ſimple declaration of ſcripture truth.

Almoſt innumerable texts might be produced from the Septuagint, and from the New Teſtament, to prove that the term *aion*, and its derivative *aionios*, which are ſuppoſed to import endleſs duration, when applied to future miſery, really ſignify nothing more than an *age*, *diſpenſation*, or *continued period*, whether longer or ſhorter in duration. The ſelection of ſuch texts in abundance has been made by others, to which the learned can eaſily have recourſe; and as for others, they would not thank us for the trouble of tranſcribing them.

Nor is it of any moment in this argument, that the term is applied to God himſelf; for we can no more infer from thence his proper eternity, than we can argue the endleſs duration of the Levitical prieſthood and ritual, and of the land of Canaan as the poſſeſſion of Abraham's ſeed, and of the preſent earth and mountains, &c. from the annexing of the phraſes *everlaſting*, *for ever*, &c. to them. The ſcriptures nowhere offer proof of the being of God, which granted, his *eternity* follows of courſe, and cannot depend upon the meaning of any word.

When the phraſe is, therefore, applied to God, it is unneceſſary to reſtrict it to its uſual import; becauſe to him eſſentially and neceſſarily belongs *duration without end*. But when it can be proved that eternity, or never-ending duration, flows as neceſſarily and eſſentially from the exiſtence of future miſery, as from the being of God, we will admit that the phraſe may be taken in the ſame latitude without any injury or impropriety, but not till then. Were not God eternal, he could not be God; but ſurely he is under no neceſſity to continue future miſery without end, paſſing his own pleaſure; whence to argue for the *abſolute eternity* of future miſery, becauſe the word that denotes its duration is applied to God, is neither candid nor concluſive.

The original phraſes in both Teſtaments, rendered *for ever* in our verſion, literally tranſlated is, *to*, or *for the age*. This phraſe *for ever*, is often redupli-cated *with us, for ever and ever*, or, ſtrictly rendered, *to, or for the age of ages*. The original phraſe is ſtill farther increaſed in its import, or reduplicated a ſe-

ond time, the force of which is quite loſt or obſcured in our verſion. In the ollowing paſſages of the Greek Teſtament we find *age of ages* mentioned, Gal. . 5. Rev. i. 6. xviii. 14. x. 6. xiv. 11. xv. 7. & xx. 10. If the ſingular hould be rendered *ever*, the plural muſt be *evers*, ſo that the above phraſes would be properly tranſlated, *for the ever, for the ever of the evers*, and *for he evers of the evers*. All who know this to be the original muſt grant this o be the literal rendering, if we make *ever* the correſpondent of *gnolam* and *aion*, s our tranſlators have done. But how ſimple and eaſy underſtood the original, ompared to this; *for the age, for the age of ages*, and *for the ages of ages*. Here there is no confuſion of ideas, and nothing of the original loſt or obſcured, l which is done in our common verſion.

Since the term *aion*, in the ſingular, denotes an *age*, the plural of courſe muſt : uſed to ſignify a duration that conſiſts of *more ages* or *periods than one*; for s reduplication is a good reaſon why we ſhould underſtand it in that general nſe, and not reſtrict it, as is uſually done, to the import of the ſingular. We n have ſome idea of a *duration* that conſiſts of a *collection of ages*; but a dura- on *of eternities of eternities* is wholly unintelligible. And yet if the Hebrew ord *gnolam* or *olam*, and the Greek one *aion*, have the ſame import or force ith the Engliſh word eternity, ſuch muſt be the ſtrict rendering of theſe redu- licated phraſes in ſcripture.

We are told, Rev. xi. 15. that when the kingdoms of this world ſhall become ne kingdoms, or the one kingdom of our Lord, and of his Chriſt, that he ıall reign *for ever and ever*, in the Greek, *for ages of ages*, or all theſe ſuc- eſſions of time, which ſhall intervene between that period and his delivering up ne kingdom, or the adminiſtration of it, as by him received, into the hands of he Father, that God may *be all in all*, 1 Cor. xv. 28. We find the ſame phraſe, Eph. iii. 21. where the *doxology* to God is thus expreſſed, "Unto him be glory n the church, by Chriſt Jeſus, *throughout all ages, world without end*, or lite- ally, *to all the generations of the ages of ages*. Is it not paſt diſpute, that if *or ever* denotes *to all eternity*, then the above phraſeology of the Holy Spirit, roperly rendered, muſt run *to all the generations of the eternities of eternities?* Here four eternities at leaſt muſt be underſtood, but the language is general nough to comprehend as many thouſands. We ſee what an abſurdity the common ſyſtem lands us in, fathering it at the ſame time on the Holy Spirit! for, properly ſpeaking, there is and can be but one eternity, or duration with- out beginning or end. Time reſpects creatures only, and is but like a ſhort pa- renthеſis in the immenſe volume of eternity, or rather a ſtream flowing from a reat river, which does not impede its courſe, but after running a certain diſ- ance, returns to its former channel, and is loſt in its parent flood. The Bible ives no account of what took place before the commencement of time, and ums up all our information of what ſhall take place, when time ſhall be no ore, by telling us that *God ſhall be all in all*. The ſcripture account begins nd ends with Chriſt's reign, which ſhall extend to the cloſe of the *age of ages*, nd comprehends the whole extent of time, with all its events, which are all ſub- ected to his conduct and adminiſtration.

After what I have adduced, is it neceſſary to add any more ſcripture authorities, to ſhew that the terms rendered *ever*, *everlaſting*, *eternal*, will by no means bear the ſenſe annexed to them in our language? The phraſe rendered, Tit. i. 2. *before the world began*, is literally *before the eternal times*, if we give the Greek word *aionios* the ſenſe contended for. The ſame is, *before the age-laſting times* or *periods*, or as our verſion has it, tho' not ſo literal, *before the world began*. Our Lord's promiſe to his diſciples, "Lo, I am with you alway, *even to the end of the world*, is, *to the cloſe of the age*, by which he evidently intends, *throughout the whole period of the goſpel-diſpenſation*, Mat. xxviii. 20. But how would it do to render it, "I am with you to the *end of eternity?*" and that would be the juſt tranſlation, if the word *aion*, *age*, which is here rendered *world*, properly ſignifies *eternity*, a plain proof it does not; for then eternity would have an end. Peter's phraſe, ſpeaking of the holy prophets, who have been, as our tranſlation has it, *ſince the world began*, is literally *from the age*, that is, from the beginning of Chriſt's reign over men, Acts iii. 21.; but how would it anſwer to render this *ſince eternity began?* and yet, if the received opinion be well founded, that rendering would be juſt. Paul ſpeaks of the myſtery which hath been hid *from the beginning of the world*, literally, *from the ages* Eph. iii. 9.; but let it be tranſlated, which hath been hid *from the eternities*, or, with our verſion, inſerting *beginning*, whence it would run, *from the beginning of the eternities*, and ſee what ſenſe we could make of it.

If the Greek phraſe, *hyp aionos*, *from the age*, cannot mean *from all eternity*, as has been abundantly proved, no more can the other phraſe, *eis aiona*, *for ever*, or *to* or *for the age*, intend *to all eternity*. And what is of limited duration, as the term *aion*, *age*, is, cannot amount to a proper eternity, let it be reduplicated ever ſo often; as the addition of ever ſo many particles cannot render the ſum total infinite. The ſaints are ſaid to reign with Chriſt *for ever and ever*, and the ſmoke of the torment of the wicked is alſo ſaid to aſcend *for ever and ever*, which plainly intimates, that the miſery of ſome of the wicked at leaſt, and of none more likely than of many of thoſe who periſh under the goſpel, ſhall be of equal duration with the reign of the firſt-born church in the New Jeruſalem. What an awful thought to thoſe who reject the goſpel, and to barren profeſſors, who reſt in the form of godlineſs. "Whoſo deſpiſeth the word ſhall be deſtroyed; but he that feareth the commandment ſhall be rewarded;" margin, *ſhall be in peace*, Prov. xiii. 3. As Chriſt's own mediatory reign will come to a period, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, the reign of the ſaints with him cannot be ſuppoſed to tranſcend that period; no mean proof of the limited duration of future miſery.

As the reduplication of the Greek word *aion*, affords proof that it does not mean eternity, ſo the addition made to the Hebrew term *gnolam*, and in the Septuagint to the word *aien*, by which they render it, is ſufficient evidence that the Jews did not view the ſimple term as denoting *unlimited duration*, no not even with ſuch additions; and ſurely thoſe who tranſlated the Old Teſtament into Greek, were as much maſters of both languages as any can now pretend to be. To give the greater emphaſis to the word *aion*, they added the Greek particles *eti*, *yet*, *ſtill*, *farther*, and *epe kei na*, *further beyond*. An inſtance of the uſe

of the firſt occurs in Exod. xv. 18. Dan. xii. 3. "The Lord ſhall reign *for ever and ever, kai eti, and farther;* they ſhall ſhine as the ſtars *for ever, kai eti, and farther,*" or *ſtill.* The addition of the latter occurs, Mic. iv. 5. "We will walk in the name of the Lord our God *for ever, kai epekeina, and farther,* or *beyond it.* This exactly correſponds to the *le gnolam vegnad* of the Hebrews, *to* or, *for the age and beyond it,* the ſame phraſe that is tranſlated *for ever and ever.* If *aion* itſelf, denotes *duration without end,* for what purpoſe make ſuch additions? But it is abundantly obvious that the tranſlator of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, and the ſacred writers of both Teſtaments, did not affix to theſe terms, which import duration, the ideas which occur to a mere Engliſh reader, upon meeting the phraſes *everlaſting, eternal, for ever,* and *for ever and ever,* in his Bible. And we are not juſtified in applying the idea of unlimited duration to theſe terms, when they occur connected with future puniſhment, which is extending their meaning beyond what their uſe in ſcripture will warrant, and conſequently adding to God's threatenings, and detracting from his promiſes.

I have often thought, that the compilers of the Engliſh language could not annex to the term *ever* the idea now generally affixed to it, elſe they could not have uſed it in compound words as they have done. We have *whoever, whoſoever, whenceſoever, whenever, whenſoever, wherever, whereſoever,* &c. which have nothing analagous to eternity in their meaning. Words, in courſe of time, loſe their primary acceptation, and receive new ones, and ſometimes very oppoſite ones, as the words *knave* and *villain*; which were originally taken in a good ſenſe.

The Gaelic language is allowed by the beſt judges to be very ancient. In the terms that denote duration, it correſponds much more to the Hebrew and Greek than the Engliſh, as does alſo the Latin. *For ever,* or the Greek *eis ton aiona,* is rendered uſually in the Greek verſion *gu brath.* That the word *brath* or *brach,* does not denote endleſs duration, but a certain period, that is ſuppoſed to bring about ſome remarkable change in nature, and to follow each other in ſucceſſion, may be ſeen, by conſulting Dr. Smith's Gaelic Antiquities. The reduplicated phraſe, *eis ton iona ton aionon, for ever and for ever,* is in Gaelic either *o linn gu linn, from age to age, from generation to generation,* or *gu ſaoghal nan ſaoghal, to the world of worlds, to the age of ages.* Thus in the doxology, Eph. iii. 21. the laſt clauſe of the verſe is rendered, *air ſoadh gach aile linn, gu ſaoghal nan ſaghal; throughout all generations, to the age of ages, to the world of worlds.* The word *ſaoghal, world,* agrees much better to the Greek term *aion,* than the Engliſh word *world;* becauſe, beſides denoting the viſible creation, or the earth and its inhabitants, it imports time or duration, as divided into various portions. Thus it is applied to the period of a man's life. Long life, *ſaoghal fad, gheair-ſhaoghalach,* ſhort-lived.

In Latin, *for ever,* is expreſſed by *in ſeculum,* to or for the age; *for ever and ever, in ſeculum ſeculorum,* to the age of ages, or, *in ſecula ſeculorum,* to the ages of ages. Thus we ſee how the moſt ancient of languages perfectly agree with the ſcripture phraſeology reſpecting duration, and all go to eſtabliſh the limited nature of future puniſhment, that it ſhall not be end

leſs, but endure for ages, with ſome even for the age of ages, or the for ever and ever.

Though I have already exceeded in the length of this letter, yet I cannot conclude it without giving place to ſome reflections ſuggeſted by the review of the portions of ſcripture referred to above, and many others of the ſame nature, the particular enumeration of which would be tedious, and protract this epiſtolary correſpondence to an undue length. When we advert to the various renderings given, in our verſion of the Old and New Teſtament, of the ſame plain original terms, the meaning of which is ſufficiently fixed in ſcripture, we cannot help wondering. Would any human author expreſs himſelf in ſuch equivocal terms, did the language in which he wrote admit of it, in a matter the miſunderſtanding of which would be productive of danger and loſs, as our tranſlation of the ſcriptures puts in the mouth of the Holy Spirit? Neither our own language, nor any other, ſo far as I know, affords an inſtance of any word capable of ſuch divers and oppoſite meanings. The Chineſe language is ſaid to abound ſo much in vocables, that they have no fewer than 500 words to denote the lion; but then theſe are always appropriate to one object in nature. But the ſame original terms and phraſes are made to aſſume, Proteous like, a great variety of different ſhapes in our language, that entirely divert the reader's mind from their plain, primary, and fixed meaning, and ſuggeſt ideas quite different, and even oppoſite thereto.

But can we ſuppoſe the Holy Spirit, who ſeeks the edification of men, and leads the blind in a plain path, would uſe terms capable of ſuch various and very different renderings, tho' human language could admit of it, and, conſequently, ſo exceedingly vague and indiſcriminate in their import, as to bear almoſt any meaning, however oppoſite, or indeed no meaning at all, whence they are ſometimes paſſed over in our tranſlation in ſilence, as deſtitute of any ſignification, or wrapt up in a circumlocution? To ſuppoſe ſuch a thing, would be to reflect highly on the inſpiration of the ſcriptures, and to diveſt them of all authority, as an unerring rule of faith and conduct; thus making them, even by the authority of the Spirit, a kind of noſe of wax, which every one, by the aid of ſuch vague terms and phraſes, may form and faſhion at pleaſure. If men would conſider this, they would not be ſo ready to condemn the guiltleſs, for endeavouring to remove ſtumbling blocks, upon which many have fallen. It was deemed a crime of old to lay a ſtumbling block before the blind. Can it be doing God ſervice, to contend earneſtly for the words of men, and the meaning they have thought proper to annex to them, and to cenſure with ſeverity, and condemn every attempt to bring the words of the Holy Spirit from the obſcurity with which they are veiled by mere human gloſſes. If in this attempt I, and others, to whom I am unworthy to be compared, have done evil, let them bear witneſs againſt the evil; but if well, why ſhould they reproach us with the ſcourge of an unbridled tongue?

The words which God uſes are, as we might expect, fixed and uniform in their meaning, and admirably ſerve to expreſs his own wiſdom, and correſpond *to the meaſures of his adminiſtration; whereas thoſe which men have ſubſtituted in their place, unhappily* ſerve to obſcure both the one and the other. He that

is of God, heareth God's words; and do not my words do good, saith he, to him that walketh uprightly? John viii. 47. Mic. ii. 7. But tho' the canonized words of men tend often to mislead, and to give wrong views of the divine administration; yet, savouring of the wisdom of the world, and befriending the ruling passions of the human heart, these glosses of scripture to which they give rise, and by which the word of God is made of none effect, and in too many instances, of bad effect, find their zealous advocates in every age, to too many of whom, professors not excepted, the wisdom of God appears foolishness. It is wise and just in him to hide the wisdom of his word from these *wise and prudent* judges, and to reveal them to babes, Mat. xi. 25. On such a subject, David says, "Concerning the works of men, by the words of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer," Psal. xvii. 4. and the prophet, "Cease ye from man," Isa. ii. 22. The pure words of God, which have not been perverted, by passing through a human furnace, are the sharp two-edged sword of the Spirit, which he has appointed for the use of his servants who must not keep it back in the day of battle; for there is no sword like it, whether for attack or defence, and that all such shall know, one time or other, who presume to repel it, or turn away its edge.

Did men duly weigh the above plain remarks, they would soon silence their clamours, and unchristian censures, and lead them to acknowledge, that the darkness is in themselves, and in the words without knowledge, that are too often employed to express the counsels of heaven, but by which they are not seldom darkened; and not in the chaste language of the Holy Spirit, by which these counsels are clearly expressed in the word of truth. The work and reward of correcting such mistakes and errors are with God, and the judgment to be passed on such work and its authors, is surely with the Lord, Isa. xlix. 4. and therefore let the word of the kingdom, to which every appeal, in such cases, should be made, and not the opinions and glosses of men, now determine every religious controversy; for every servant of Christ is set for the defence, not of these, but of his holy scriptures.

That attempts to benefit mankind should be requited with odious epithets and dread anathemas, tho' strange, is no new thing; for "if they have called the Master of the house," who spake and acted as never man did, "Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household," Mat. x. 26. The Jews so far from recognizing Jesus as the God of Israel, and the Saviour of the world, they called him, in derision, *the god of flies*, which is the literal meaning of the term Beelzebub. Such was the treatment he received from the greatest professors, in the then existing church, whether of the priesthood or people.—Let none then be surprised, as if any strange thing befel them, should their attempts to serve their Lord and Master procure them the odious title of *the servants of the god of flies*, or the servants of the devil, and that from the greatest professors, who are ever but too ready to judge their brethren and their works before the time, and that by another rule than the word of life; for so persecuted their fathers the prophets, Christ himself, and his apostles, and yet thought they did God an excellent service. They that would serve God with their *spirit, in the gospel of his Son*, and please their fellow men only for the

profit, that they may become partakers of truth and holineſs, muſt lay their account to bear, in the firſt inſtance, the miſconſtruction of their words and actions, and the condemnation of their views and conduct. This has been the manner from the beginning, and let none ſtumble at the word on its account—May the Lord haſten the happy time when there ſhall be nothing to hurt nor deſtroy in all his holy mountain, and when the light of the moon ſhall be as the light of the ſun, and the light of the ſun as the concentrated light of ſeven days! Mean time, let our moderation be known to all men; for the Lord is at hand.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours cordially, &c.

LETTER XI.

Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? He that is of God, heareth God's words. Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father.—Thus ſaith the Lord, concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war againſt him; therefore night ſhall be unto you, that ye ſhall not have a viſion, and it ſhall be dark unto you, that ye ſhall not divine, and the ſun ſhall go down over the prophets, and the day ſhall be dark over them.—Mic. ii. 7. John viii. 47. Mark viii. 38. Mic. iii. 5, 6.

Dear Sir,

SOLOMON connects an over-rating opinion of our own wiſdom with an indolent diſpoſition. "The ſluggard is wiſer in his own conceit, than ſeven men that can render a reaſon," Prov. xxvi. 16. Thoſe who pay undue deference to human authority in matters of religion, whoſe ſtock of religious knowledge is acquired, without the trouble of examining for themſelves, and who are content with taking a ſuperficial view of the one ſide of a queſtion, in order to make up their mind upon it, fall under the character of Solomon's ſluggard; for theſe are ever poſitive in their own opinion, and treat that of others with ſupercilious contempt. The ſame wiſe man ſaith, "He that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and ſhame unto him," Prov. xviii. 13. Fooliſh and ſhameful as this conduct is, it is too prevalent in the world.

That doctrine, be what it will, which God has ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began, muſt occupy a principal part of the ſacred volume. It is natural to expect to find it there, and a duty to ſearch for it. Peter tells us, that this doctrine is *the reſtitution*, or final reſtoration *of all things*, Acts iii. 21. He directs our attention to the great agent in this glorious work, the Lord Jeſus, and to times or periods after his appearance in his glorified humanity, as the era fixed in the divine purpoſe for its accompliſhment. *The uſe of the word* in ſcripture, from which the term rendered reſtitution, is

derived, may give us ſome idea of its meaning. The evangeliſts uſe it when relating the cure wrought on the poor man in the ſynagogue, by which his withered hand is ſaid to be *reſtored* whole as the other; alſo for the perfect recovery of ſight, Mat. xii. 13. Mark iii. 5.—viii. 25. Luke vi. 10. This intimates ſuch a change as ſhall recover the ſubjects of it to a capacity of anſwering the ends of their exiſtence, as in their former or original ſtate: "His hand was *reſtored whole* as the other." He put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was reſtored, and ſaw every man clearly. The farther uſe of it in the New Teſtament, teaches us that this change is to be of a moral nature, and to be effected by means fitted to operate on moral agents. It is applied to the grand object of John's miniſtry, and the reformation produced by his preaching, Mat. xvii. 11. Mark ix. 12. The nature of this reformation is deſcribed, Luke i. 16, 17.;—by turning many of the children of Iſrael to the Lord their God;—by turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt: To make ready a people prepared for the Lord. In the paſſage from which this is quoted, the Seventy makes uſe of the verb rendered to *reſtore*, from which the term in queſtion is derived. This ſhews that the reſtoration of all things is to relate to moral agents, and to be accompliſhed by the miniſtry of the goſpel, accompanied by the powerful agency of the Holy Spirit. And from the uſe of the term, Acts i. 6. it ſeems alſo to import the recovery of loſt dominion or authority; "Lord, wilt thou at this time *reſtore again* the kingdom to Iſrael?" Elias or John the Baptiſt may be ſaid to have reſtored all things, becauſe he had the honour to introduce that diſpenſation, which ſhall terminate in, and with the final reſtitution or reſtoration of all things, Mark x. 2. This will reſtore light to the underſtanding, and life, love, and purity to the heart, whence ſhall flow perfect rectitude of conduct, and the trueſt happineſs.

From the benefit of ſuch a change, why ſhould we exclude any beings that truly need it, and are capable of it, if the word of God do not urge to that excluſion? There we are told, that "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given *all things* into his hand, John iii. 35. The ſame truth is elſewhere expreſſed, and the word of God is not ſilent as to the purpoſe for which all things were given into Chriſt's hand. We are told that he gave his life a *ranſom for all* 1 Tim. ii. 6. that he *will* have *all* men to be ſaved and come to the knowledge of the truth; and that he is the one Mediator between God and *men*, even all for whom he gave his life a ranſom, and will have to be ſaved. "It pleaſed the Father by him to reconcile *all things* to himſelf, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. i. 19, 20. In the *diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times*, which is diſtinct from the preſent diſpenſation, the Father is to *gather together in one all things* in Chriſt, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, or to rally and reduce them under him as their common head, Eph. i. 10. He is the Saviour of *all men*, 1 Tim. iv. 10.; is appointed heir of *all things*, Heb. i. 2 who, as the ſecond Adam, was made a quickening ſpirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45.; the Son quickeneth whom he will, John v. 21.; even as the Father who quickeneth *all things*, 1 Tim. vi. 13. or gives them life. He will ſubdue all things to himſelf—*inherit all nations*—deliver the whole creation from the bondage

corruption to the glorious liberty of God's children—reſtore *all things*; and make *all things new*. Let us hear his own words; "*all* that the Father giveth me ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wiſe caſt out," John vi. 37. Compare this with chapter iii. 35. Here we have the firm baſis of the final reſtoration of *all things*; the Father has given them to the Son, the Son promiſes that they ſhall come to him, and that he will in no wiſe caſt any of them out. How plain and concluſive the argument!

Would it not be ſurpriſing, that the Spirit of God ſhould uſe the general phraſe *all things*, in theſe and many other inſtances, if he meant only a very few things?* "The Lord," ſays Peter, "is not willing that any ſhould periſh,

* The whole art of maintaining the common doctrine depends on the addreſs diſcovered in explaining away the univerſal term *all*, and phraſe *all things*, ſo as to make them intend only a very few things. Without this addreſs, that doctrine muſt fall to the ground. A ſecond extract, from a ſermon already referred to in theſe letters, places this matter, in the writer's opinion, in a very clear light.——'We muſt not diſpute the truth of this declaration, "Chriſt Jeſus gave 'himſelf a ranſom for *all*, to be teſtified in due time, becauſe he had before ſaid, Chriſt loved the 'church, and gave himſelf for *it*." Some will perhaps ſay, that if they ſhould find in the apoſtle's writings, that *Chriſt died for all*, and *taſted death for every man*; that even in that caſe 'they would not believe that he died for any more than his elect; becauſe the word *all* is frequently limited. But why *muſt* it be ſo here? Only becauſe it is contrary to your ſyſtem and way 'of thinking. By the ſame rule that you will contend, that the word *all* is limited in theſe 'texts; others will limit it in other paſſages, and ſome will limit it here, and others there, till 'every truth of the Bible is evaded. The word *all*, is never uſed in a limited ſenſe in the 'ſcriptures, where there is any danger of being led aſtray by the uſe of it: there is alway ſome'thing in the context, or in the nature of the thing, or in ſome other paſſage, by which we may 'certainly tell in what ſenſe the word is uſed.

'But in this caſe, what is there in the nature of things, that forbids the idea of Chriſt's dying 'for *all*, if he pleaſed, and he could die for *all*, as eaſily as for one, or a few. This reaſonable 'argument is ſufficient to convince any perſon, that he died for *all*, unleſs the ſcriptures declare 'the contrary; and if they do, let the paſſage be pointed out, and I have done. But after many 'public and private challenges to produce *one*, that declares, *he did not die for all*, none has been 'found. If the word *all* was ambiguous in itſelf, Paul, by defining the extent of it, and letting 'us know in what ſenſe he uſed it, has reduced it to a certainty.

'Thou haſt put *all things* in ſubjection under his feet: For in that he put *all* in ſubjection 'under him, he left *nothing* that is not put under him. But now we ſee not yet *all* things put 'under him, Heb. ii. 8. Here he lays down the rule by which we muſt underſtand him in his 'writings, when ſpeaking of theſe great matters. It is evident that he uſes the word *all* mathe'matically; as the whole, conſiſting of, and being equal to all the parts. Now, ſhould Paul uſe 'the expreſſion *all things* in a limited ſenſe, after telling us that *nothing* could be left out where 'all things were include', without letting us know in the context that he uſed the word *all* in an 'improper or limited ſenſe, what muſt we think of his character, either as a divine or a 'logician?

'He mentions the ſame univerſal ſubjection in 1 Cor. xv. 27.; but there he expreſsly makes 'one exception to the rule, and by making that one, which muſt be ſelf-evident, he hath for ever 'put it out of our power to make another. "For he hath put *all things* under his feet. But 'when he ſaith, *all things* are put under him, it is manifeſt that *he is excepted* who did put *all* 'things under him." That is, God the Father is excepted, and he alone; nothing elſe in heaven 'above, nor on the earth beneath, nor throughout the vaſt dominion of Jehovah.

'The Apoſtle, with this rule immediately in his view, directly aſſerts, that tho' we do *not yet* 'ſee *all things put under him*, that is, brought into a willing ſubjection to him; (for in every 'other ſenſe they are now put under him): "But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower 'than the angels, for the ſuffering of death crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the 'grace of God, ſhould taſte death *for every man*;" or, as ſome render it, *for all*.

'In an ancient manuſcript, mentioned by Ambroſe, Grotius, Beza, and Cornelius a Lapide, 'theſe reſpectable authorities, the words were, not χαριτι Θεου, *by the grace of God*; but 'χωρις Θεου, for all *excepting God*; and ſeveral ancient copies, as well as the Syriac Teſtament, 'bring in their verdict here, and ſay this is the true reading; and ſhall we ſay, this reading is 'contrary to the analogy of faith, and receive no additional ſtrength and countenance from it?

'*Upon this ſingle* paſſage we might venture the whole cauſe, nor fear deception, ſince the 'Spirit has never in any place denied, but has here plainly affirmed, that Chriſt hath taſted death

but that *all* ſhould come to repentance," 2 Pet. iii. 9.; and ſhall his will never have full effect? Why ſhould we not allow that our bleſſed Lord will reſtore his own works, in as full and complete a ſenſe as he is ſaid to have created them, ſeeing the ſame unlimited expreſſion is ſo often employed to repreſent the one as well as the other? With regard to the human race, may we not adopt the words of Michael, in his prophetic account to Adam of our Lord, as the repairer of the fatal conſequences of the fall?

> Which he who comes the Saviour, ſhall re-cure,
> Not by deſtroying Satan, but his works,
> In thee, and in thy ſeed. ——————— PARADISE LOST, B. xiii. 393.

Is our Redeemer ſaid to have aboliſhed that death which ſtands oppoſed to that life and immortality which are brought to light thro' the goſpel? 2 Tim. i. 10. and are we then juſtified in excluding from that abolition, that future miſery which alone deſerves the name of death, or in confining it to the elect, when the goſpel reveals life and immortality to all that hear it? To theſe, in my opinions the ſecond death only is properly oppoſed. The Pſalmiſt ſaw how

'*for all things*, and nothing is left out? "There is one Mediator, who gave himſelf a ranſom 'for *all*, to be teſtified in due time," 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. which can intend nothing leſs than. *all men*. 'From 2 Cor. xv. 14, 15. Paul reaſons, as from principles already eſtabliſhed, that certainly *all* 'were dead, ſince Chriſt died for *all*; and that he *died for all*, was ſo univerſally acknowledged 'when Paul wrote, that he reaſons from it as a firſt principle, 2 Cor. i. 13. So that this great 'and glorious foundation of faith had been from the beginning laid by the Apoſtles, and ac-'knowledged by the churches.—"If any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus 'Chriſt the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our ſins, and *not* for ours *only*, but alſo for 'the ſins of *the whole world*," 1 John ii. 1, 2. Thus the goſpel which the Apoſtles preached, 'contained both what may be called particular and general redemption; and let who will teach 'the contrary, they are not to be received.'

To this plain ſenſe of the term *all*, Dr Owen objects, in a treatiſe purpoſely written to overturn the univerſal doctrine, that it cannot intend individuals, but only *all kinds or ſorts*. In proof of this he refers us to Luke viii. 42. *all manner of herbs*, in the Greek, *every herb*; and to Mat. iv. 23. healing *all manner* of ſickneſs, and *all manner* of diſeaſe; in the original, *every ſickneſs* and *every diſeaſe*. But does not every one ſee that this uſe of the term *all*, or, in the ſingular, *every*, carries its own reſtriction with it, and therefore cannot in the leaſt affect the plain natural meaning of it; where doctrinal points are concerned.

Our bleſſed Lord ſpeaks of his own miniſtry, Mat. xix. 28. or the goſpel diſpenſation, as a regeneration, or a renovating ſyſtem, by which he would lead our minds to the final iſſue, as compriſing the actual renovation, or forming all things into a new and better ſtate of exiſtence. It eſcaped me to obſerve, that John xvii. 2. may be literally rendered, "as thou haſt given him power or right of *all fleſh*, that the *whole* which thou haſt given him, he may give them the *aionian* or eternal life." Some critics conſider the Greek word παν here as an Hebraiſm for πανϛι; but it may be rendered *the whole*, or *every thing*. But tho' the grammatical conſtruction is a little uncommon, the plain ſenſe of the text ſeems to be, that the Father has given our Lord right to, or power over all men, to the end that he might give eternal life to theſe all men committed to him for that purpoſe. Underſtanding theſe and the like phraſes in this latitude, what a noble and ſublime ſignificancy muſt we perceive in that doxology with which the Apoſtle concludes his diſcourſe on this ſubject! "for off him, and thro' him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen," Rom. xi. 36. Upon the common ſyſtem, how much is the ground of this aſcription to God diminiſhed, and the obvious and ſublime ſenſe of many other paſſages of ſcripture! But underſtanding them in their plain meaning, and what a glorious proſpect does the Pſalmiſt and the Prophet preſent to our view, in the following ſtrong figurative paſſages! "then ſhall *all* the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for ye ſhall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills ſhall break forth before you into ſinging, and all the trees of the field ſhall clap their hands," Pſa. xcvi. 12. Iſa. lv. 12. All profeſſors, whether Jewiſh or Chriſtian, are repreſented in ſcripture as trees in a garden, ſome of them fruitful, and others barren and cumberers of the ground; but the heathen are the trees of the wood and of the field, all of whom ſhall at the Jubilee rejoice before the Lord, and clap their hands.

puniſhment was reconcilable with the exerciſe of mercy, in the caſe of the wicked Jews, "Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, tho' thou tookeſt vengeance of their inventions," Pſal. xcix. 8. The ſame connection is obſervable in Pſal. lxii. 12. "Alſo, unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou rendereſt to every man according to his work;" a plain proof that puniſhment, whether preſent or future, flows from, and is a work of mercy. And hence David ſays, "I will ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing," Pſal. cx. 1. Let us not preſume to break the connection. Why ſhould we then ſet theſe two at eternal variance, under the divine adminiſtration, as if he changed with the lapſe of fleeting years? After ennumerating inſtances of their rebellion, obſtinacy, ingratitude, inordinate luſts and hypocriſy; he adds, "But he, being full of compaſſion, forgave their iniquity, and deſtroyed them not; yea, many time turned he his anger away, and did not ſtir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but fleſh; a wind that paſſeth away, and cometh not again," Pſal. lxxviii. 38, 39. Do they ceaſe to be his creatures and offſpring when they paſs the confines of this mortal ſtate, and he to be full of compaſſion? or do the reaſons here mentioned then ceaſe to weigh with him? To ſuppoſe this, would be to contradict his own declaration, and reverſe the inference drawn from it: "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye ſons of Jacob, are not conſumed:" I am the Lord, I change; therefore ye ſhall be conſumed," Mal. iii. 6. This laſt reverſed clauſe we juſtly reject, as contrary to his character and word.

Let any one read what is ſaid of our Lord's tender compaſſion, even towards the bodies of men, Mark viii. 2, 3. and ſay, if he can,

With him ſhall dwell relentleſs wrath
Againſt the human race;
The ſouls that he has made can't find
A refuge in his grace.

Do we not greatly injure his character, and abridge his favourite work, by confining both to this vale of teare, and to a very few of his creatures? Will he be incapable of feeling compaſſion for the miſerable in the ſtate to come? or will he, in that ſtate, always deny himſelf the pleaſure of exerciſing it, tho' we are told he delights in mercy? It reſts with the abettors of the common doctrine to eſtabliſh the one or the other upon ſcripture premiſes; what, I am perſuaded, they will find to be a hard taſk.

The words of Paul to Titus are remarkable: "For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation hath appeared to *all* men," Tit. ii. 11. By grace we are to underſtand the goſpel, by means of which grace is communicated to the ſouls of men. This hath never yet appeared to all men. But the margin renders the verſe, in ſtrict conformity to the original: *For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation to all men hath appeared.* That this cannot mean to be reſtricted to mere exhibition or declaration of grace, is evident; for in this ſenſe the goſpel never yet brought ſalvation to *all* men, and never can, under the preſent diſpenſation. But looking into Parkhurſt's Lexicon, I find that the word *ſoterios* ſignifies *ſaving, affording ſalvation*, the ſame as to ſay, that the goſpel ſhall prove *ſaving, afford*, or actually bring ſalvation to *all* men. It is literally *the ſaving*

grace of God, and ſhall ſooner or later prove the means of imparting that grace to all, which ſhall iſſue in their complete deliverance from ſin and miſery, and recovery to holineſs and happineſs.

I find Paul viewing the ſalvation that is in Chriſt, probably as taken in the above extent, as diſtinct from that eternal glory, which ſhall be the peculiar privilege of the elect, or the church of the firſt-born: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's ſake, that they may alſo obtain the ſalvation, which is in Chriſt Jeſus, *with eternal glory*," 2 Tim. ii. 10. In the Greek, it is the *aionian*, or *age-laſting glory*, that which the elect ſhall enjoy during their reign with Chriſt throughout the *age of ages*, or the *for ever and ever*, as introductory to the higheſt glory and bleſs above, in which none of the reſt of mankind can participate. This ſhews the meaning of that phraſe, "the Saviour of *all* men," as conſiſting in their deliverance from the curſe, and all its effects, and reſtoration to holineſs and happineſs, but "eſpecially of thoſe that believe, 1 Tim. xiv. 10. as they are not only freed from the ſecond death, but obtain that eternal glory, in addition to that *common ſalvation*, as Jude calls it, probably for this reaſon, becauſe it comprehends all men.

In the 42d of Iſaiah many things occur, which, viewed in the light of the reſtoration, appear truly glorious. It is foretold that the elect One, in whom God's ſoul delighteth, ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, or the nations; that he ſhall ſhew or publiſh to them alſo the merciful goſpel, Mat. xii. 18. the word in the Hebrew ſignifying either *juſtice* or *mercy*;—that he ſhall ſet judgment in the earth;—that the Lord will give him for a covenant of the people, probably the Jews, and for a light of the Gentiles, or the nations, denoting the reſt of mankind. We ſee his work, "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and, or, even, them that ſit in darkneſs, out of the priſon-houſe," ver. 27. It is intimated, that before this takes place, a preceding work ſhall be finiſhed: "Behold, the former things are come to paſs, and *new things* do I declare; before they ſpring forth, I tell you of them," ver. 9. How extenſive the call in the next verſe to celebrate the Lord in a *new ſong*, in which thoſe "that go down to the ſea, and all that is therein," are invited to join. We have a parallel paſſage in Pſal. xcvi. 11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, or exult; let the *ſea* roar, and the fulneſs thereof; or, as ſome render it, "let the ſea thunder, and its fulneſs." The apoſtle John directs us to the accompliſhment of all this, when, beſides the church of the firſt-born, "every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them," ſhall aſcribe *bleſſing, honour, glory, and power* to him that ſitteth upon the throne, *and* to the Lamb, Rev. v. 13.

I cannot tarry to remark on the things recorded by the prophet. In ver. 13. we are told, the Lord ſhall go forth as a mighty man; and the conſequence ſhall be, "he ſhall prevail againſt his enemies." I find the clauſe before this, *he ſhall roar*, rendered on the margin of Montanus' Interlinear Bible, *he ſhall keep a jubilee*, what is often foretold in the ſacred writings, with regard to the time to come. The age of ages, or the New Jeruſalem period, is the only one under Chriſt's reign viewed in the light of the reſtoration, that will correſpond to the

jubilee under the law. Then Jeſus ſhall prevail over his enemies by wiſdom, truth, and love.

The Pſalmiſt tells us, that they ſhall ſubmit themſelves to him, Pſal. lxii. 3. and this ſame prophet, that every knee among them ſhall bow to him, and every tongue ſwear allegiance, and confeſs him Lord, to the glory of God the Father Iſa. xlv. 23. Phil. ii. 10. The people in whoſe behalf ſuch things are to be wrought, are repreſented, ver, 22, 23. as in a very forlorn ſtate, robbed, ſpoiled, hid in priſon-houſes, a prey, and a ſpoil, while none delivereth, or ſaith, Reſtore;—the fury of God's anger is ſaid to be poured upon them, and the ſtrength of battle, whence they are ſet on fire round about, and burning; and all for ſinning againſt the Lord, refuſing to walk in his ways, and being diſobedient to his laws. Is it not worth inquiry how far ſuch deſcriptions extend to, or actually intend, the miſery of ſinners beyond the grave.

In the 52d of Iſaiah ſome things occur, to which I beg leave to advert. In the 7th verſe, the feet of the meſſenger that bringeth good tidings, are ſaid to be beautiful upon the mountains, that publiſheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publiſheth ſalvation; that ſaith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Then Zion is addreſſed, "Thy watchmen ſhall lift up the voice; with the voice together ſhall they ſing; for they ſhall ſee eye to eye when the Lord ſhall bring again Zion." Upon this there is an exhortation to break forth into joy, to ſing together, and this is addreſſed to *the waſte places of Jeruſalem!*—What follows directs to the period to which theſe things are to be referred. "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of *all* the nations; and *all* the ends of the earth ſhall ſee the ſalvation of our God."—Of Meſſiah it is ſaid, at the cloſe of the chapter, that, as a conſequence of his ſufferings, "he ſhall ſprinkle *many* nations," cleanſing them from all their filthineſs, and from all their idols, even all the nations before whoſe eyes he ſhall make bare his holy arm; "the kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him; for that which had *not been told* them ſhall they *ſee*, and that which they *had not heard* ſhall they *conſider*." That the kings of all nations are included, cannot well be doubted. We ſee here the gracious effects of the goſpel upon them, when they are brought to enjoy it; they ſhall ſee what had never been told them during their reign on earth; they ſhall conſider that which they had not then heard; and ſhut their mouths at, or before him, with holy ſhame, and humble acquieſcence in his will and word. All this was realized in type in Solomon, 2 Chron. ix. 23, 24. and ſhall be fully accompliſhed in antitype in Solomon's Son and Lord, Pſal. cxxxviii. 4, 5.----cxlviii. 11. 14. If *all* the kings of the known earth, during Solomon's reign, gave him homage and tribute, and reſorted to hear his wiſdom will not all the kings that exiſt during Chriſt's reign, pay him ſimilar reſpect and their people too?

In the 96th Pſalm, referred to above, we find a number of things that can never be fully realized upon the received ſyſtem. All the earth, according to the great Meſſiah in Pſalm 2d. is invited to join in a new ſong to the Lord, and to ſhew forth his ſalvation;---to declare his glory among the heathen, or nations, *his wonders among* all people, or peoples, being in the plural. In the 7th verſe, *the kindreds*, or families of the people, again in the plural, are to

horted to aſcribe to the Lord glory and ſtrength, correſponding to his promiſe, and oath to Abraham, that all the families of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him, and in Meſſiah. *All the earth* is again addreſſed, ver. 9. The heathen, or the nations, are to be told, that he reigneth, and that the world ſhall be ſo eſtabliſhed as not to be moved, which muſt be the world to come, or the new earth, as the general conflagration ſhall remove the old. It is promiſed that "he ſhall judge the people," where the plural occurs again, denoting all people, righteouſly, or in rectitude. In the 11th and 12th verſes, we find the ſubſtance of the jubilee deſcribed, by figures truly elevating to the human ſoul. Are mankind in ſcripture repreſented under the figure of a foreſt, and of woods? *Then* ſhall all the trees of this wood rejoice, as the phraſe imports, with the higheſt exultation. The two following pſalms are alſo full of the ſame glorious things, as alſo many others, but I cannot tarry to remark.

Only in the 98th pſalm, the ſame ſubject is continued. The marvellous works of Jehovah are propoſed as the ground of celebrating his praiſe in a new ſong. He is ſaid, ver. 2d. to have made known his ſalvation, and revealed his righteouſneſs in the ſight of the heathen, or in the eyes, or full in the view of the nations; the paſt, as in the prophetic ſtile, being put for the future. In ver. 3. *all the ends of the earth* are ſaid to have ſeen the ſalvation of Iſrael's God; which is yet to be accompliſhed. Upon this the whole earth is invited to make a joyful noiſe, or to keep a jubilee to Jehovah; not in the ſpirit and contracted ſenſe of the Moſaic ſyſtem, which confined this to the Jews, but in the ſpirit and enlarged ſenſe of the goſpel-diſpenſation. In alluſion to the ancient manner, various inſtruments of muſic are introduced, and the whole earth, or all mankind, are exhorted to obſerve a jubilee, with the higheſt joy and feſtivity, before Jehovah their King. Then the ſea is commanded to roar, or to thunder applauſe, and the fulneſs thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. "Let the floods clap hands," adds the Pſalmiſt; "let the hills be joyful together," or leap for joy, before the Lord; becauſe he cometh to judge the earth, and will judge the world with righteouſneſs, and the people with equity, or peoples, intimating that no people ſhall be deprived of the benefit of this jubilee.

Let us attend to the office and work of the judges in ancient Iſrael, who were types of Meſſiah, and we will have ſome idea of what is meant by his judging the earth, and how this ſhall furniſh ground of univerſal joy.

It is proper to obſerve, that where the terms Gentiles and heathen occur in our tranſlation, in the original it is *nations*, in conformity to God's promiſe and oath to the patriarchs. In the laſt verſe of the 24th of Iſaiah, the Spirit of God appears to me to have in view that ſame jubilee, the outlines of which are ſo often celebrated by the Pſalmiſt: "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he hath commanded to a thouſand generations, Pſal. clxv. 8.—Let theſe hints ſerve as a key to ſimilar paſſages, the reaſon why I have adverted to them. To explain them as realized in the preſent diſpenſation of the goſpel, or even in the millennium is, in my opinion, to mutilate them, and to veil the chief part of their glory. After all the pains I could take to come at their meaning, by comparing ſcripture with ſcripture, I feel obliged to refer *their accompliſhment to the* new earth, in which ſhall dwell righteouſneſs, and

where the will of God ſhall be done as in heaven. This jubilee ſhall commence with the deſcent of the New Jeruſalem, and rapidly increaſe in glory and felicity, till it leave that earth full of the knowledge and of the glory of Jehovah. Is there any thing in this unworthy of God, or beyond the extent of his power? "Behold, I make *all things new*," ſays he; "for with God all things are poſſible," Rev. xxi. 5. Mark x. 27.

Will the reaſon God gave for ſparing the Ninevites, from the threatened deſtruction, never have the leaſt weight with him for recovering his miſerable creatures from the deſtruction of the ſecond death? "And God ſaw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that he had ſaid he would do unto them, and he did it not," Jonah iii. 10. Will the miſerable, in a future ſtate, be for ever incapable of ſuch repentance as the people of Nineveh exerciſed! The negative cannot be proved; and if not, how ſhall we account for the alleged change in God's nature and conduct? For is he not unchangeable and of one mind?---The words of Elihu perfectly correſpond to God's conduct on that memorable occaſion. "He looketh upon men, and if any ſay I have ſinned, and perverteth that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his ſoul from going into the pit, and his life ſhall ſee the light," Job xxxiii. 27, 28. To what pit does the ſoul go down, in conſequence of guilt unrepented of, and unpardoned? Surely the pit of hell. A man's life may be ſaid to *ſee the light*, when a ſenſe of Divine forgiveneſs adminiſters conſolation to his heart. That the above reaſon ſhall eternally ceaſe to operate in the future ſtate, does not ſeem to accord with God's immutability, or to be deducible from any ſcripture premiſes. What Elihu farther adds, merits attention: "Lo, all theſe things worketh God *oftentimes* with man," margin, *twice and*, or, *yea, thrice*, "to *bring back his ſoul* from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." To confine this to a recovery from ſickneſs, or a bringing back from the gates of death, is to ſink the meaning of the paſſage. To be *enlightened with the light of the living* ſurely intends much more than to enjoy this mortal life, and the light of the natural ſun, for a little longer. Light and life, in God's eſtimation, denote happineſs; and to be enlightened with the light of the living, is to be made partakers of the felicity of the bleſſed. The various ways by which God brings this about, may be denoted by his working theſe things *oftentimes*, or, as in the original, *thrice*. Here there may be a plain alluſion to the preſent ſalvation, denoted by delivering a ſinner's ſoul from *going into* the pit, and cauſing his life to ſee the light; and to the future reſtoration, by bringing *back* the ſoul from, or out of the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. If we admit that, beſides the grand releaſe at the great jubilee of the univerſe, ſome diſembodied ſpirits may be delivered from *hades*, or the ſtate of the miſerable, during the intermediate period between death and the general reſurrection, we ſee the three ways in which God worketh ſuch things.——I ſubmit theſe remarks to your own judgment, as appearing to me worthy of ſome attention.

What Solomon ſays, Eccl. iii. 11. "No man can find out the work that *God maketh from* the beginning to the end," furniſhes a reaſon why the reſtoration *is not believed* by many, when its evidence is adduced; for men love

have ſome merit in diſcovering what they believe, and cannot bear to receive even truth from thoſe they deem their inferiors, perhaps, in every reſpect. We are ignorant of many of God's works, and even of theſe in which we have ſome knowledge, we view them only in detached parts; whence our conceptions of them are very partial and defective, and of that power, wiſdom, and goodneſs which bring them to paſs. Finding the certainty and awful ſeverity of future puniſhment clearly aſcertained in ſcripture, and not finding out that work from the beginning to the end, but ſuppoſing it to be not a mean to bring about a certain end, but the end itſelf; final deliverance from wrath, it is ſtrenuouſly oppoſed, as if that work of God were the ſame from beginning to end, or rather without end. The ground of the error of the Sadducees ignorance of the ſcriptures, and of the power of God, appears to be at the bottom of the denial of, and violent oppoſition to, the doctrine of the final reſtoration, Mark xii. 24.

In the ſame chapter, the royal preacher appears to me plainly to ſay, that the end or grand deſign of God's diſpenſations with the children of men, is to bring them to the exerciſe of true repentance, and the poſſeſſion of genuine humility. "I ſaid in my heart concerning the eſtate of the ſons of men, or of Adam, that God might manifeſt them, and that they might ſee that they themſelves are beaſts," Eccl. iii. 18. I find the middle clauſe rendered, *that God might chooſe*, or *purify them*; and the margin has it, *that they might clear God*, that is, juſtify him in all his proceedings, *and ſee themſelves to be beaſts of burden*, which corroborates the ſenſe given. The laſt clauſe clearly intimates, not only the reaſon why he manifeſts them, that they may know and feel their own depravity, moral degradation, brutal ignorance and manners, included in ſeeing themſelves *beaſts*; but alſo to whom he makes this diſcovery, he manifeſts them to themſelves, as a neceſſary ſtep to their recovery. Solomon ſpeaks of this as the *eſtate of the ſons of men*, or of Adam, as in the original, without excepting any, that is, of the human race, which God has purpoſed concerning them, and to which he will at length bring them.

The eſſence of true repentance conſiſts, in viewing ourſelves in the ſame light in which God repreſents us in his holy word. There man, unrenewed by grace, and in arms againſt his Maker, and his own ſpecies, is compared not only to the ſtupid ox, and dull aſs, but to dogs and ſwine, yea, to the moſt ferocious of the beaſts of prey, and the moſt noxious of the viper breed, Iſa. xi. Pſal. xxii. Mat. iii. "Wiſe men die, likewiſe the fool and brutiſh," Pſal. xlix. 10. "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutiſh man knoweth not; neither doth a fool underſtand this," Pſal. xcii. 5, 6. "Be not as the horſe or as the mule, which have no underſtanding," Pſal. xxxii. 9.—— We find a true penitent humbly confeſſing, "So fooliſh was I, and ignorant; I was as a beaſt before thee:" in Hebrew, "I was a *behemoth* before thee," a great unruly beaſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 22. The term *brutiſh* is applied to thoſe who attend not the word and works of God, "Underſtand, ye brutiſh among the people;" and to ſuch as hate wholeſome admonition or reproof, "he that hateth reproof is brutiſh," Pſal xciv. 8. Prov. xii. 1. Agur, when debaſed in his *own eyes, makes this* humble confeſſion. "Surely I am more brutiſh than any

man, and have not the underſtanding of a man," Prov. xxx. 2. To bring the proud heart of man to this, is the peculiar province of divine grace. Was not the haughty monarch of Babylon brought to ſee and to own himſelf a beaſt, when he made that noble confeſſion, by which he gave glory to the God of heaven, the Author of all exiſtence? Dan. iv. 34, 37. I think it is abundantly obvious, that God's manifeſting *the ſons of men*, that they might ſee that *they themſelves are beaſts*, which made their eſtate a ſubject of deep contemplation to Solomon, can intend nothing ſhort of the future repentance, and recovery of thoſe children of Adam who do not attain this in the preſent ſtate. In theſe as in all my other remarks on ſcripture texts, I have not knowingly affixed a forced ſenſe to any, tho' I pretend not to ſay, that I have always hit the true one, of which let the reader judge. In my opinion, the certainty of the final reſtoration of the *non-elect*, or unbelieving part of mankind, which conſtitutes the great maſs, may be juſtly argued from the ordinance of the *kinſman redeemer* under the law, who was evidently intended to prefigure Meſſiah. He was to exert himſelf in favour of his deſtitute kinſman;---to redeem his patrimony, if mortgaged thro' poverty or otherwiſe;---to pay his ranſom, if ſold into ſervitude;---to avenge his blood, if he was murdered, and, if he died childleſs, to eſpouſe his widow, and ſo keep up his family in Iſrael. Thoſe who think they make part of the elect, view our Lord as the *Goel*, or kinſman Redeemer of ſuch excluſively; and therefore, in their uſual manner, monopolize to the elect church all the privileges connected with that character. Monopoly, in other caſes, is thought prejudicial to ſociety; but when it extends its effects to eternity, it becomes truly ſerious. If mankind, in general, conſtitute God's great family, it is hard to confine his paternal regards wholly to a few. Can he not give the paternal bleſſing, and the double portion to the firſt-born, without depriving the reſt of the children of every expreſſion of his regard to all eternity? Our Lord calls men, in general, his brethren; "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," Pſal. xxii. 22. and what elſe can they be, ſeeing they are the common offſpring of his Father, and our Father? He that is related to the firſt-born of the family, as a kinſman, cannot be an alien to the reſt of the children. Chriſt is the Redeemer of the whole; and the firſt born, that under him have the pre-eminence, and ſhall be firſt in order, ſhall not prevent his fulfilling that truſt to the reſt in due time. Tho' the inheritatnce of the firſt-born be irrecoverably loſt to thoſe who periſh in unbelief, yet their kinſman Redeemer is engaged to recover them from bondage, having paid their debt, and ranſomed their perſons, to put them in poſſeſſion of their patrimony, tho' of an inferior kind, and deliver them from their forlorn and widowed ſtate. Let the ſaints be therefore humble under a ſenſe of their own unworthineſs, and duly grateful for that grace which has made them to differ, and reſerves for them the double portion, and the prieſtly and royal honours of the Father's houſehold; but let them not preſume to diſpute, or call in queſtion, that Father's right, will, and authority, to give ſo much as the portion of a baſtard to their younger brethren, and that at ever ſo remote a period.

If the gathering of the firſt-fruits, though in the detached form one by one, *occaſion joy in heaven*, what will the ingathering of the whole harveſt prove,

when nations ſhall be born at once? Then ſhall it appear, that the younger branches of the great family of man, are not wholly overlooked in the divine plan of mercy, as ſo many think. I cannot help thinking, that the things foretold in the 102d. Pſalm, though they have a partial accompliſhment in the ſucceſſive revivals of Zion, under the preſent diſpenſation, yet look forward to the more full and glorious *diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times*, as the only period of their entire completion. Of that period it is predicted, that the heathen, or the *nations*, ſhall fear or reverence the name of Jehovah, and *all* the kings of the earth his glory, ver. 15. I find the following verſe, which may be connected with the preceding, thus rendered in Biſhop Hare's verſion, "After Jehovah ſhall have built up Zion, and his glory ſhall have been ſeen *in Jeruſalem*." This verſion is juſt and literal, except that *in Jeruſalem*, is a ſupplement. This places the converſion of the nations, and of *all* the kings of the earth, after the deſcent of the New Jeruſalem, the era fixed for that glorious work in the reſtoration-ſcheme. The next verſe tells us, that the Lord will regard, and no longer deſpiſe the prayer of the deſtitute, or of the ſolitary, as the original alſo imports; and who more ſolitary and deſtitute than the priſoners of the ſecond death, whoſe mournful cries ſhall, for a long, long night, be ſhut out of the ears of Jehovah, even to the age of ages? The following verſes may and are thus rendered, "Let this be written for the lateſt generation, even a people that are to be created ſhall praiſe Jehovah; becauſe he hath propitiouſly looked down from the ſublimity of his holineſs, or the height of his ſanctuary, from heaven he hath fixed his view on the earth, to hear the deep groaning of the priſoner, or of the bound with fetters, to looſe or liberate the *ſons of death*, or deſtruction; when the peoples ſhall be aſſembled together, and the kingdoms to ſerve Jah, that they may relate or declare in Zion Jehovah's name, and his praiſe in Jeruſalem." This is the order of the Hebrew in the Biſhop's copy, and alſo in his literal Latin verſion Does not the people that ſhall be created, or that ſhall be born, who ſhall praiſe the Lord, anſwer to what we have at the cloſe of the 22d. Pſalm, *a people that ſhall be born, whom he ſhall create*, as the laſt clauſe may be rendered? Are not theſe included in the *all things* that the Lord ſhall make new?

Do not theſe things plainly point at ſome grand event, beyond any thing to be expected under the preſent diſpenſation? Who can be meant by the ſons or children of death or deſtruction, who are repreſented as faſt bound in priſon, to whoſe deep groans the Lord is ſaid to lend an ear, in order to ſet them at liberty? Let what is recorded of the caſe and deliverance of ſuch, in the 107th Pſalm, be carefully read, and it may force conviction, that more forlorn and wretched priſoners, than any on earth are intended In this view, with what additional joy may we celebrate the paſt advents of Meſſiah, as expreſſed in the following lines!——

"On him the Spirit, largely ſhed,
Exerts his ſacred fire:
Wiſdom and might, and zeal and love,
His holy breaſt inſpire.

He comes! the pris'ners to relieve
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of braſs before him burſt,
The iron fetters yield."

Tho' I have already exceeded in the length of this letter, yet you will indulge me, while I add a few remarks, connected with the above.——In peruſing the 47th of Ezekiel's prophecy, I could not help being ſtruck at ſome things, which occur in that chapter. The vaſt increaſe of divine influences, in the period referred to, is repreſented under the figure of *living waters*, iſſuing from under the threſhold of the temple. Theſe waters gradually increaſe, till they become a great *river that could not be paſſed over*. Theſe go down into the deſert, and alſo into the *dead ſea*, or the lake of Sodom, which is a ſtanding figure of hell itſelf. Thus the waters of the dead ſea are ſaid to be healed, whence "every thing that moveth, whitherſoever the *river* ſhall come, ſhall live," or be happy, "and there ſhall be a very great multitude of fiſh, becauſe theſe waters ſhall come thither; for they ſhall be healed, and every thing ſhall live whither the river cometh," ver. 9. Here we read of rivers, intimating probably a twofold diſpenſation of goſpel grace, or what ſhall take place from the commencement of the millennium to the cloſe of Meſſiah's reign. That the ſame ſtate is ultimately included here, if not, indeed, principally intended, which John ſaw in viſion, as in the two laſt chapters of the Revelation, there can be no doubt; for John had evidently the prophet's viſion in his eye, in his deſcription of what he there records.

The banks of the dead ſea are repreſented as a ſtation for fiſheries, where they ſhall ſpread forth their nets, and that the fiſh there caught ſhall be according to their kinds, as the fiſh of the great, or Mediterranean ſea, exceeding many. Two ſtations are particularly mentioned, En-gedi, and En-eglaim, and the meaning of theſe Hebrew term deſerves conſideration, the former denoting *the well of the goats*, and alſo *of happineſs*, and the latter, *the fountain of calves*. The wicked are called *goats* in the account we have of the proceſs of the laſt judgment, Mat. xxv. 33. If it be the will of God to unſeal a fountain of happineſs yet for them, who has a right to ſay to him, What doſt thou? A humble penitent people are compared to *calves*; "and ye ſhall go forth and grow up as calves of the ſtall," Mal. iv. 2. The Lord can give ſuch a fountain of living waters. Our Lord's parable of the net caſt into the ſea, &c. Mat. xiii. 47, 48. and his promiſe to make his diſciples *fiſhers of men*, furniſh a key to the right underſtanding of the prophet's viſion. If ſuch things ſhall be brought to paſs in the lake of Sodom, will any preſume to ſay, that no ſuch thing ſhall ever be realized in that lake of which this is a ſtriking figure?

When I read that *the breath of the Lord*, like a ſtream of brimſtone, kindles the fire of Tophet, Iſa. xxx. 33. this excites ſeveral ideas in my mind. While this repreſents the terrible nature of future puniſhment, like a furnace enflamed by the continued blowing of the Almighty's breath, it ſeems likewiſe to ſpeak mercy. As God is full of compaſſion, his breath muſt ſavour of the tender *mercies of his heart*; which are ſaid to be over all his works, and conſequently *over the kindling* of theſe flames, with his divine breath. It was by

the breath of the Lord, or Spirit of the Lord's breathing on the ſlain, in the valley of viſion, that they came to live, Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10. If we allow the breath of the Lord to mean his Spirit, which it is often employed to denote, then it would appear, that his gracious operation or influences ſhall not be always excluded even from the dread abode of the ſecond death. As at the beginning, when the earth was not ſeparated from the intermixed waters, the Spirit of the Lord moved on the face of the great deep, imparting life and energy, and reducing all to light, order, harmony, and beauty; ſo when the earth ſhall be brought to a ſimilar ſtate by the general conflagration, the ſame Spirit ſhall move on the dread burning lake, and produce, we would hope, ſimilar effects. He ſhall there too, breathe on the ſlain, and cauſe them to live. Is not this imported in the living waters, in Ezekiel's viſion, going into the dead ſea, healing its waters, and their progreſs, cauſing every moving thing to live. Is it not remarkable, that the ſame proceſs which prepares the puniſhment of the wicked, is the emblem of conveying the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit: "He breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt?" John xx. 22. The uſe of ſuch phraſes in ſcripture, is not a fortuitous thing; for the language of the ſcripture is uniform, and calculated to lead us in the right path. The deſtruction of the man of ſin ſhall be accompliſhed by the ſame mean, the breath or ſpirit of God's mouth, which ſhall be attended with the brightneſs of his coming; "And then ſhall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the ſpirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming," 2 Theſſ. ii. 8.

The water of life, and the breath of the living God go together, and theſe are never repreſented as viſiting any region from which all hope of mercy is entirely excluded. We have reaſon to believe, that the fire which the breath of the Lord kindles, is not intended to deſtroy his own works, but thoſe of the devil. Man, as a creature, is God's workmanſhip; but ſin is the work of Satan, and that corrupt plant deſtroyed, miſery, its fruit, muſt periſh with it. The Lord knows how to ſpare what pertains to himſelf, while he takes vengeance on the inventions of his guilty offspring, and deſtroys what belongs to his adverſary.—Much is imported in that expreſſion, "The kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward *man* appeared," Tit. iii. 4. the ſame as toward the whole human race; for we may, with as much propriety, limit it to one man as to a few.

When men have worldly property legally bequeathed to them, do they need as much reaſoning to convince them of the validity of their claim, as experience ſhews to be neceſſary, to reach conviction of the truth of the final reſtoration? Why ſhould they be at ſuch pains to limit the virtue and fruits of our Lord's ſufferings and death, when there is enough in theſe for all? It is univerſally granted, that theſe are of infinite efficacy, and conſequently ſufficient, not only to ſave the elect, or all that believe in the preſent ſtate, but alſo to recover the reſt of mankind finally to holineſs and happineſs, did God ſo determine. But is it not highly unbecoming, in profeſſed children, to repreſent their heavenly Father as determining to limit the bleſſed effects of his Son's mediation.

inconceivably within the bounds which their own infinite fulneſs requires? What good reaſon can be aſſigned, why the Father ſhould ſo much confine what tends greatly to his own glory, the Redeemer's honour, and alſo the honour and happineſs of his intelligent creation; that we muſt be at ſuch pains to explain away every paſſage of ſcripture that gives an enlarged view of his merciful deſigns? Is there not joy in heaven, joy in the preſence of the angels of God, over the repentance even of one ſinner? and why ſtrain every nerve to plead a cauſe that would rob bleſſed angels and ſaints, nay more, God himſelf, Father, Son, and Spirit, of ſuch an acceſſion of joy as muſt ariſe from the recovery of all the loſt prodigals, whoſe folly and guilt drive them to the land of Nod, or the dark joyleſs territory of the ſtranger beyond the grave?

" Pleaſure and praiſe run thro' God's hoſt,
To ſee a ſinner turn;
Then Satan hath a captive loſt,
And Chriſt a ſubject born!"
But greater joys by far ſhall riſe,
When all the ſecond-born
Become allied to the ſkies,
And Jeſus' reign adorn.

Praying grace, mercy, and peace may be with you, and with all the Iſrael of God, yea, with all men, according to his purpoſe. I remain,

Dear Sir,

Cordially yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

Behold, thou ſhalt be dumb, becauſe thou believeſt not my words, which ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. For with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible.—Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; for the Lord will have mercy upon his afflicted. Thus ſaith the Lord, I will give thee to eſtabliſh the earth, to cauſe to inherit the deſolate heritages.—Thou ſendeſt forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou reneweſt the face of the earth.—The wicked ſhall be no more. The beaſt of the field ſhall honour me, the dragons and the owls; becauſe I give waters in the wilderneſs, and rivers in the deſert, to give drink to my people, my choſen. This people, have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe.—All fleſh *ſhall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.*—Luke i. 20, 37. Iſa. xlix. 13, 8. Pſal. civ. 30, 35. Iſa. xliii. 20, 21.—xlix. 26.

Dear Sir,

IN peruſing the ſacred volume, who can help being often ſtruck with wonder at God's conduct towards his rebellious creatures; and ſeeing the force of theſe words, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways *higher than your* ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts?" Iſa. lv. 8, 9. *We hear the Lord* ſumming up a heavy charge againſt the rebellious Jewiſh na-

tion in theſe remarkable words, "Thou haſt made me to ſerve with thy ſins, thou haſt wearied me with thine iniquities," Iſa. xliii. 24. But in the very next verſe we find him addreſſing the ſame people, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins!"—Verily this is not the manner of man, O Lord.

David, when confeſſing his ſins, urges his petition for pardon by an argument which, to man, would operate the contrary way: "O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great," Pſal. xxv. 11. Many ſuch things occur in the ſacred records, but muſt we conceal them, becauſe ſome may abuſe them to the purpoſes of licentiouſneſs? In order to ſecure honour to God, according to our notions of honour, muſt we rob him of the glory of exerciſing mercy, while miſery exiſts among his offspring, and of making things new while their old ſtate of ſin and miſery remains?

Is it not worthy of God, the Father of all, to ſay, in his own good time to his miſerable creatures, O my rebellious offspring, ye have deſtroyed yourſelves, but in me is your help to be found? What has his people now to object to this; or what right have they to object to any part of his procedure? If he ſhould yet prove ſo good to the miſerable, and has given reaſon in his word to expect this, ſhould their eye be evil and envious, becauſe he is good? What if they themſelves ſhould come to be of the number that need ſuch a deliverance, and among the laſt who ſhall ſhare its benefit? for it is alas! too evident, that thouſands who exclaim againſt the final reſtoration, have not the faith of the goſpel, but in works deny it. Few, indeed, of the preſent generation of profeſſors diſcover the ſcripture marks of God's elect. And do not many, who, we would charitably hope, are building on the true foundation, mix with their work much wood, hay, and ſtubble, materials that cannot abide the fire? Paul plainly ſuppoſes that a man's work may be burned, whence he ſhall ſuffer loſs, a word connected with damnation, but he himſelf be ſaved, or reſtored, as the verb alſo imports; yet ſo as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 15. What was ſaid of the wicked Jews may alſo apply to profeſſed Chriſtians, and the doctrine of the reſtoration teaches to what extent: "Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee," Ezek. xxiv. 13. How ſerious this to profeſſors who build hopes upon ſuppoſed attainments, while the old leaven of malice and hypocriſy is not purged away!

Eternity, like infinity, exceeds all human conception; for let us ſtretch our thoughts to the utmoſt, and exhauſt all the powers of numbers in calculating, this ſo far from comprehending eternity, reaches only a portion of it. Eternity annexed even to a mere trifle raiſes it into importance. But there is not the leaſt occaſion for adding unceaſing duration to the puniſhment threatened againſt wicked men, in the word of truth, if they repent not, in order to make it truly terrible, and an object of ſolemn dread to every intelligent being. It is ſurpriſing any ſhould think ſo, who have acceſs to conſult the ſcriptures, and would be terrified at a ſhock of the earth that laſted but a few ſeconds. Thoſe who talk as if unlimited miſery were neceſſary to make it anſwer any valuable moral purpoſe, offer an *inſult to their Maker*, and diſcover little knowledge of human *nature, and of the properties* of that fear or reverence which the Lord require

and which avails to true holineſs. Inſtead of calling the period of taking vengeance, *a day*, and that of exerciſing mercy, *a year*, as is done in ſcripture; upon the common ſyſtem, it ſhould be reverſed; for that makes the time of exerciſing mercy leſs than a day or an hour, compared to that eternity during which vengeance is to be inflicted. The Spirit, however, conforms his language to his ſubject.

The Jews gave Paul a patient audience till he mentioned his being ſent far hence unto the Gentiles, which made them exclaim, "Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he ſhould live," Acts xxii. 21, 22. We have ſtill our myſtical Jews, that cannot bear to hear of the goſpel being ſent to the Gentiles, or the poor loſt nations that are in the country where peſtilence, famine, and death rage.

We are told "the Lord will have mercy upon his afflicted;" and to thoſe who think the afflicted with the great tribulation of the ſecond death have no intereſt in this promiſe, may he not reply, "Is my hand ſhortened at all, that it cannot redeem," or bring back by power from that priſon? "or have I no power to deliver" thence? Iſa. xlix. 13. chap. l. 2. What Dr Horne remarks on Pſal. ciii. 17, 18. may, in perfect conſiſtency with ſcripture, be applied to the human race: "Let not man deſpair, whoſe nature, with all its infirmities, the Son of God hath taken upon him. The flower which faded in Adam, blooms anew in Chriſt, never to fade again. The mercy of Jehovah, in his Meſſiah, is everlaſting; and of that everlaſting mercy poor frail man is the object. It extendeth to all the generations of the faithful ſervants of God;" and we may add, to the unfaithful too, elſe how do impenitent ſinners become faithful? It is as much the work of mercy to make them ſo, as to keep them ſo, and to extend to them, in their reſpective generations when made ſo. "Death ſhall not deprive them of its benefits, nor ſhall the grave," no, not any grave, "hide them from the efficacious influence of its *all-enlivening* beams, which ſhall pierce even into thoſe regions of deſolation."

The book of Pſalms is full of the univerſal doctrine, and nothing but the operation of the pruning-knife of modern divinity, and its effects on the human mind, could prevent their being ſeen. In the 103d. Pſalm, ver. 19. we are told that Jehovah's kingdom ruleth over all. We ſee in the laſt verſe why his kingdom ruleth *over all*: "Bleſs the Lord, all his works in *all* places of his dominion." Some, in their wiſdom, make the exerciſe of his univerſal authority to produce nothing in ſome places of his dominion but imprecations and blaſphemies; but David had not learned this part of modern divinity; for he had his education only in the old ſchool. Will any ſay that hell makes no part of Meſſiah's dominion, when he is the Judge that dooms wicked men and angels to that priſon, keeps the key of it, and a watchful eye over the ſtate of the priſoner? If it makes no part of his dominion, then his kingdom or reign does not rule over it, and conſequently cannot extend or rule over all. The word of God is harmony and truth. His tender mercies are ſaid to be over all his works, and conſequently all his works are exhorted to bleſs him, yea, and they ſhall in *due time verily bleſs him*; for God never exhorts to that for which he never will *give juſt occaſion*. We are told that all his works ſhall praiſe or bleſs him, and

or that purpoſe join in one harmonious ſong; and what has guilty man to object, who himſelf is a conſtant penſioner on the Divine mercy? Guilty creatures never bleſs God till they are firſt bleſſed of him.

I intended to have diſmiſſed this part of the ſubject before this time, and to have proceeded to anſwer ſome objections; but there is ſcarce a time I open my Bible, without ſeeing what appears to me to be additional evidence of the reſtoration, which has led me to protract the ſubject. Tho' I adverted before to ſome things in the 49th of Iſaiah; yet, turning my attention to it the other day, much freſh light occurred from it on the ſubject, which I muſt now wave. The 56th Pſalm begins with a call to the *whole* earth to keep a jubilee to the Lord, and to celebrate his glory, and in the following one the delightful ſubject is continued. I cannot confine the things there recorded, either to the elect, or to the millennium, or indeed to any period antecedent to the day of judgment. In the 102d. Pſalm too, things occur, which cannot, in my opinion, be explained upon the common ſyſtem, without doing them manifeſt violence. To ſome of theſe to which I have already adverted. At the cloſe of the 104th Pſalm, we find the church praying, "Let the ſinners be conſumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more." It ſhould be rendered in the future, as ſuch forms of prayer or imprication often ought, and are in different verſions. God conſumes ſinners by his word, and by his judgments, both of which are made ſubſervient to the deſtruction of the works of the devil. The latter clauſe here plainly ſhews the ſenſe, he will prove ſuch a conſuming fire to them, that the *wicked* ſhall be no more. In the Hebrew it is *the ungodly*, the ſame term as in Pſal. i. 1. "Bleſſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel of the *ungodly*." The term rendered *no more* is that which occurs often connected with *gnolam*, *a hidden period*, *le gnolam vegned*, which is tranſlated *for ever and ever*, literally, *to the age and beyond it*. It denotes, according to Parkhurſt, *being beyond*, *further*, or *beſides* ſomewhat elſe. It is tranſlated in our verſion, *yet*, *ſtill*, *moreover*, *again*, *yet again*, *any more*, *a long while*, *alſo*, *any other*, *any elſe*, *until*, *to*, *unto*, *even*, *whilſt*, *during the time that*. This is one of the words upon which much of the ſtreſs of eternal miſery is laid, and theſe different ſenſes are tranſcribed from the above author's Lexicon on the Hebrew Bible, where the learned can ſee the texts referred to. Is a word ſo variouſly rendered capable of being the baſis of ſuch a fabric? If ungodly men ſhall not be *any more*, or *beyond* a certain period, or ſomething elſe referred to, as I find it rendered in two famed Latin verſions juſt now before me; what right have we to ſay, in oppoſition to the plain declaration of ſcripture, that ungodly men, as ſuch ſhall exiſt for ever? The God of the elect is alſo their God, and why ſhould he not be allowed to be a conſuming fire to the one as well as to the other?

Are real Chriſtians called *kings and prieſts*—made ſo by Jeſus to his and their God? The Pſalmiſt deſcribes part of their royal authority over the nations, the people, their kings and nobles, upon whom they are to execute the judgment written, and adds, "This honour have all the ſaints," Pſal. cxlix. 9. The ſame may be ſaid of their prieſtly office, which is common to them all. Of Zacharias it is ſaid, "*According to* the cuſtom of the prieſt's office, his lot was to burn *incenſe when he went into* the temple of the Lord, and the whole multitude

the people were praying without at the time of incenſe," Luke i. 9, 10. This was the cuſtom in the old Jeruſalem, under the Moſaic diſpenſation, and ſhall there be nothing to correſpond to it in the New Jeruſalem, under Meſſiah's glorious reign there? If it be the lot of the whole church of the firſt-born, as the prieſts conſecrated to the ſervice of God, to burn incenſe in that city, which will be wholly like the Holy of holies of the ancient temple, where ſhall we find a multitude to pray meantime without, except upon the ſcheme of the reſtoration? The titles *kings and prieſts* are relative terms; and ſeeing all the ſaints have this honour, or all the conſecrated ones, there muſt be a people over whom they ſhall rule as kings, and among whom they ſhall officiate as prieſts. The common ſyſtem quite deſtroys the analogy here, between the old and the new ſtate of things, as it indeed does throughout the whole extent of the Jewiſh economy, and patriarchal diſpenſation. That ſyſtem is ſurely to be ſuſpected, however popular and of long ſtanding, which ſerves like an ax in the hand of a fierce Chaldean to hew down the carved work of the houſe of the Lord; and what a pity when the prieſts of the temple perform this work!

The tribe of Levi were typical of the elect in every age, and all the other tribes of the reſt of mankind. As that tribe were choſen, not to the excluſion of the reſt from the divine favour, but for their good; ſo the official object of the peculiar election of grace, is the ſalvation of their brethren, the other children in the great family of the ſecond Adam, and the final reſtoration of thoſe who ſhall die unconverted to God among them. Thus we ſee how the types of the law ſhall be realized in their ſubſtance under the goſpel, particularly under the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times.

Our Lord's inference in his reaſoning with the Sadducees muſt be allowed to be juſt; that Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob live to and with God, becauſe he declares himſelf to be their God, and yet the God not of the dead, but of the living, Mat. xxii. 9. Mark xii. 26, 27. The ſame argument equally concludes in favour of the final reſtoration. Is not Jehovah expreſsly called "the God of the ſpirits of *all* fleſh," Num. xxvii. 16. and doth he not ſay, "Behold *all* ſouls are mine?" Ezek. xviii. 4. Does not this import that they ſhall yet live to him, and not always remain under the power of death? for he is not the God of the dead, and would claim no intereſt in them, did he mean to leave them always in that ſtate. In this ſenſe Paul ſays, "None of us liveth to himſelf, and *no man* dieth to himſelf: For whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the *dead and living*," or of all mankind, Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.

The ſame truth may be juſtly inferred from the reaſon God aſſigns why an inheritance in the land of promiſe could not be ſold or alienated for ever: "The land ſhall not be ſold for ever," or, as the margin has it, "ſhall not be quite cut off for ever; for the land is mine," Lev. xxv. 23. This plainly ſhews, that whatever the Lords claims a property in, cannot be totally and finally alienated; "for in the year of this jubilee ye ſhall return every man to his own poſſeſſion," *ver.* 13. Theſe things are written for our inſtruction, and ſhall be all realized *under Meſſiah's reign*. Will God never ſo take away the droſs from his ſilver, *as that there ſhall come forth a veſſel for the finer?* Prov. xxv. 4.

We ſometimes receive a hint in ſleep worth keeping, and worth relating too. Your correſpondent's thoughts have been ſo much engroſſed, for about twelve months back, about the final reſtoration, that the ſubject has often occupied his imagination in ſleep. One night he dreamed that he was arguing with ſome man upon the ſubject, and awaked with the following expreſſion freſh on his mind, which appeared not deſtitute of ſome truth. "Were future miſery without end, would the priſon of hell be called a *lake*, which denotes a collection of water bounded on all ſides by firm land?" If this earth, in its conflagrated ſtate, be the deſtined place of future wo, then hell will be a ſhoreleſs ſea of liquid fire, like the waters of the deluge that overſpread the whole earth, and roſe above the higheſt hills. In this view it cannot be called a lake, but conſidered as having a beginning, and to have an end, we ſee the propriety of calling it a lake, and not otherwiſe. Is not the dead ſea, or the lake of Sodom, its type, bounded on all ſides, and tho' it will endure, till the general conflagration, as denoting the awful duration of future miſery, yet will it be loſt in the all-involving flames. Such an argument, in a detached view, may perhaps merit little weight, but taken in connection with the poſitive evidence of the reſtoration, deſerves place. Upon that plan we ſee the force of the promiſe, "Thoſe that wait upon the Lord they ſhall inherit the earth:—the meek ſhall inherit the earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the abundance of peace. Bleſſed are the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth," Pſal. xxxvii. 9, 11. Mat. v. 5. The ſaints are the proper heirs of the new earth, and thro' their right in Chriſt, the younger brethren will poſſeſs it.

I forbear adducing any more ſcripture proofs on the ſubject, tho' others occur in the ſacred volume in abundance.——In my next I propoſe to examine the ſtrength of ſome objections againſt the final reſtoration. Permit me to conclude this epiſtle with a few remarks.——Tho' only a ſpecimen of the ſcripture evidence of the univerſal doctrine is given in theſe letters, yet ſufficient has been advanced, I ſhould imagine, to make the conſcience of the firmeſt believer of the common doctrine quake, leſt he ſhould be found ſlandering the character of his Maker, the God of goodneſs and love—robbing Jeſus of the glory he will derive from the reſtoration—blaſpheming one of the moſt glorious works of he Holy Spirit, and dealing unlimited damnation to the offspring of the common Creator, who are as good by nature as himſelf, and equally within the verge of God's ſaving power; and all this in the face of ſo much divine evidence to the contrary. But ſo long as men cheriſh a proud, ſelf-important ſpirit, and pique themſelves upon their ſuppoſed peculiar intereſt in the divine favour, the Lord will reſiſt them, and hide his truth from them; but he will give grace to the humble, and lead the meek and lowly in the path of judgment. To the ſerious conſideration of ſuch would I recommend the ſolemn words of our Lord, uttered on an occaſion not diſſimilar. "And Jeſus ſaid, For judgment I am come into the world; that they which ſee not might ſee, and that they which ſee might be made blind," John ix. 39.

In my feeble efforts to reſtore the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper to its primitive purity and ſimplicity, and to teſtify againſt the unſcriptural encroachments and *domination* of clerical power, and the blind ſubmiſſion of the people

I have had acceſs to make diſcoveries of what is in man, even in many of our greateſt profeſſors, that would otherwiſe never occur. Many are like a veſſel apparently very pure at top, but move it, and you ſoon find there is abundance of ſediment at bottom; for the liquor was permitted to ſettle upon its lees. The native effects of Chriſt's fan is to ſet the chaff in motion; and too much of it remains about the beſt. One cannot help wondering where the bulk of profeſſed Chriſtians have learned their Chriſtianity, it has ſo little foundation in ſcripture, or rather is ſo oppoſite to the word of truth. If you happen to differ from them in any point of their creed, to which they are pleaſed, without the leaſt divine authority, to annex eſſential importance, tho' they can overlook the weightier matters of the law, they ſeem to think themſelves bound in duty to treat you as an alien, or an enemy; nay more, to think they are juſtified in making you the butt of their cruel mockings, bitter reflections, and uncharitable cenſures. In this blind and unchriſtian zeal, they place much of their religion, complimenting themſelves as wiſer, and farther ſeen in the word of God, than all that differ from them; tho', the Lord knows, they have much need to be taught the very firſt principles of the oracles of God. This zeal, and the conduct which ſprings from it, many ſeem to regard as the brighteſt evidences for glory. They perhaps think that our Lord's direction juſtifies them in all this, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican," tho' they make no conſcience of obſerving the previous rules, Mat. xviii. 17. In what manner would our Lord have his diſciples to treat heathen men and publicans? Let his own conduct interpret his meaning. He received ſuch, converſed freely with them, loſt no opportunity of doing them good, and even eat with them in the civil intercourſe of life, Luke xv *. Let his profeſſed people

* The uncharitable cavils of the Scribes and Phariſees, brought from our Lord the anſwer recorded, Mat. ix. 12, 13. ch. xii. 7. which may ſerve to ſilence ſuch in every age. I find a number of juſt remarks in Mr Henry's Commentary on theſe two paſſages, ſome of which I would gladly tranſcribe, would it not extend this note too much. He deſcribes the Phariſees, "a proud generation of men, conceited of themſelves, and cenſorious of others; of the ſame temper with thoſe in the prophet's time, that ſaid, *ſtand by thyſelf, come not near me, I am holier than thou*; very ſtrict in avoiding ſinners, but not in avoiding ſin; none greater zealots than they for the form of godlineſs, nor greater enemies to the power of it. They were for keeping up the traditions of the elders to a nicety, and ſo propagating the ſame ſpirit that they were themſelves governed by.—*I will have mercy and not ſacrifice.* That moroſe ſeparation from the Society of ſinners which the Phariſees enjoined, was leſs than ſacrifice; but Chriſt's converſing with them was more than an act of common mercy, and therefore to be preferred to it. If to do well ourſelves is better than ſacrifice, as Samuel ſhews, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. much more to do good to others.—*Go ye, and learn what that meaneth.* Thoſe have beſt learned the meaning of ſcripture, that have learned how to apply it as a reproof to their own faults, and a rule to their own practice. This ſcripture ſerved not only to vindicate our Lord, but to ſhew in what true religion conſiſts, not only in external obſervances, ſhews of ſanctity, and particular opinions, but in doing all the good we can to the bodies and ſouls of others, in righteouſneſs and peace, &c.: alſo to condemn the hypocriſy of thoſe who place religion in rituals more than in morals, Mat. xxiii 23. They eſpouſe thoſe forms of godlineſs which may be made conſiſtent with, and perhaps ſubſervient to, their pride, covetouſneſs, ambition, and malice, while they hate that power of it which is mortifying to theſe luſts.

No law muſt be conſtrued ſo as to contradict its own end. *If you had known what this means* —had known what it is to be of a merciful diſpoſition, ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs. Ignorance is the cauſe of our raſh and uncharitable cenſures of our brethren. Ignorance of the meaning of the ſcriptures is eſpecially ſhameful in thoſe who take upon them to teach others."

To theſe remarks, let me add one or two from a pious annotator, in his reflections on Acts, *chap. xii*—"*It is ſtrange* that even ſaints ſhould be ſometimes prejudiced, when their enemies, *or perſons of deteſted characters*, are made partakers of ſpiritual bleſſings; that raſh cenſures *could ſo often drop from* gracious lips, and godlike charity be reproached as too exact in religion,

learn to copy his example, in a thing in which they are criminally deficient, and yet call that defect the fruit of zeal for God and truth, in which Chriſt was ſurely not behind them. Let them beware of imitating their elder brother, in the parable of the prodigal; for the greateſt prodigals, that have wandered fartheſt from God, are ſtill their brethren, and ſtill dear to him as loſt ſons, whoſe return he expects. Let us not forget the Father's anſwer to the repining murmuring elder ſon, which is applicable to the recovery of all the younger branches of the family, "It was meet that we ſhould make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loſt, and is found," Luke xv. 32. This reaſon is ſufficient to ſilence all cavillers and murmurers at the doctrine of the reſtoration; for it will apply, in its full extent, to the poor loſt prodigals of the far country, who feel all the rage of famine and of the ſecond death.——What need have we to pray for ourſelves and others, that brotherly love may continue, and that our love to the houſehold of faith, and alſo to all men may abound? Wiſhing you and them all proſperity from and in the Lord,

I remain,

Dear Sir,

A cordial friend to your preſent and future intereſt, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Give inſtruction to a wiſe man, and he will be yet wiſer; teach a juſt man, and he will increaſe in learning.---If thou be wiſe, thou ſhalt be wiſe for thyſelf; but if thou ſcorneſt, thou alone ſhalt bear it. Then ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his diſciples, ſaying, The Scribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes' ſeat. But all their works they do to be ſeen of men. They love to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But wo unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites, for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men; for ye neither go in yourſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entering to go in; therefore ye ſhall receive the greater damnation. Wo unto you, ye blind guides; for ye have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. Ye blind guides, who ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel, Ye be witneſſes unto yourſelves, that ye are the children of them who killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the meaſure of your fathers.---Jeſus ſaid, for judgment I am come into this world; that they who ſee not might ſee, and that they who ſee might be made blind. The Phariſees ſaid, Are we blind alſo? Jeſus ſaid unto them, If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin: but now ye ſay, We ſee; therefore your ſin remaineth.—Prov. ix. 9, 12. Mat. xxiii. John ix. 39, 40, 41.

Dear Sir,

THE above things are recorded in the volume of truth, not only as a juſt cenſure on the characters immediately addreſſed, but alſo as a warning to all others

Tho' no unreaſonable prejudice ſhould hinder miniſters in the execution of their commiſſion, yet ſhould they be always ready to clear their conduct to ſcrupulous minds. And every Chriſtian alſo *ought gladly to hear* and receive any thing that may tend to remove his prejudice. *What are we to withſtand God*, who diſtributes his favours as he pleaſes?"

to beware that they offend not after the ſame example of unbelief. For the ſame reaſon they are worthy of being tranſcribed, and guilt alone has reaſon to feel alarm at the name of guilt.——The object of theſe letters has been to ſhew, that the never-ending miſery of intelligent beings, which the common doctrine maintains, is irreconcilable to many portions of ſcripture, and to the view given of the Divine character by God himſelf. Every Chriſtian is bound to examine how far this is really the caſe. The ſubject is far from being exhauſted; for every revolving day preſents freſh evidence of the truth of the reſtoration to an inquiring mind. But inſtead of tarrying to advert farther to theſe, let me proceed, as propoſed in my laſt, to examine the force of ſome objections, after having previouſly offered a few obſervations.

The idea of unlimited puniſhment, under the divine adminiſtration, is probably owing, in a great meaſure, to improper views of the nature of Divine juſtice. Many argue, as if they thought the ſole province of juſtice was to puniſh. Nay more, they plead that juſtice requires the puniſhment to be extended, both in meaſure and duration, as far as the demerit of contracted puniſhment can admit. Hence, it is thought inconſiſtent in God, as a juſt and righteous ruler, to abate to the ſinner, who leaves this ſtate impenitent, one ſingle drop of that woormwood and gall which his guilt deſerves. For my part I ſee nothing in ſcripture to warrant ſuch a view of divine juſtice; for it appears to me entirely to miſrepreſent the grand and uniform end of juſtice, and to contradict facts.—Is juſtice wholly laid aſide in the juſtification, thro' faith in Chriſt, of a penitent ſinner, the only juſtification for which the univerſal doctrine pleads? Is not God juſt, and manifeſted to be ſo, in juſtifying the ungodly that believe in Jeſus?—Would we think that ruler perverted the ends of juſtice, who ſo conducted the meaſures of his adminiſtration, as to make the puniſhment of his guilty ſubjects ſubſervient to their reformation and recovery to ſocial order and the public good? Inſtead of blaming him, would we not rather give him the honourable title of the *Father and guardian of his people?* But, ſuppoſe he ſhould act upon an oppoſite principle, and continue to impriſon and torment culprits, without the leaſt regard to their recovery to virtue and ſocial happineſs, which might be attained, if he pleaſed, would his claim to that character be better founded? It is granted even among men, who are but too apt to give ſcope to a vindictive ſpirit, that the extreme of juſtice is injuſtice.

But, to form a proper judgment of the caſe, let us admit, what is too much overlooked, that the ſubjects of God's government are all his own children, by ties that endure ſo long as he and they exiſt, tho' too many of them are, alas! diſobedient and rebellious; and that neither their guilt nor their miſery can affect him, or diminiſh his eſſential glory and bleſſedneſs, what cannot be ſaid of the diſorderly conduct of inferiors on earth, and its conſequences, and we will ſee the matter in a quite different light.

Earthly rulers having no power of changing the hearts of their people, feel ſometimes obliged to cut off offenders againſt their authority, from regard to their own ſafety, and the ſtability of their government, and to make their puniſhment *an example* to others; but the former of theſe reaſons cannot exiſt *with God, and as for the* latter, he can ſurely make limited puniſhment, or the

juſt ſeverity of paternal correction, to anſwer that end effectually, if he will. A ruler that unites in his own perſon the character of a father and a judge, muſt ſurely be much better pleaſed with the reformation of his offspring, whom he commiſerates under the fruits of their folly and guilt, than with their endleſs ſufferings or deſtruction; and does not the word of God aſſure us, that it is ſo alſo with him in the preſent ſtate? Seeing he is immutable, or that there is not with him the leaſt variableneſs, or ſhadow of change, why ſhould we aſcribe to him without neceſſity, a conduct in the ſtate to come, that proceeds from a quite different principle, and muſt be directed to a quite different end? Is not this making him variable throughout the whole of his adminiſtration? But his word declares him to be of one mind, and not to be turned. Let men beware how they repreſent their Maker as of a double mind, not only revealing what does not accord with his real purpoſes, but alſo, as turning, or altering the principle and end of his adminiſtration every moment.

When men ceaſe to do evil and learn to do well, from cordial belief of the truth, as in Jeſus, juſtice is ſatisfied, and, without this, no ſufferings of man can ſatisfy it.—From the uſe of the terms *judge* and *to judge*, in ſcripture, we may learn what the real province of divine juſtice is. How did the judges among the Jews act, ſuch as Samuel, Gideon, Jepthah, and others? Was it not their province to deliver the enſlaved, oppreſſed Iſraelites from the power of their enemies, and rule over them in their own land, protecting them from internal violence and injuſtice, as well as from the depredations and oppreſſion of their heathen neighbours? In all this they were remarkable types of our Lord, the appointed Judge of quick and dead, or of all mankind. Will he then, who is ſo nearly allied to them, as to be their Father, their Elder Brother, who even died for them, their Saviour and Proprietor, the Head of every man, and as their kinſman Redeemer, the avenger of their wrongs, and reſtorer of their lot, never judge them, in any ſenſe correſponding to thoſe in which the Jewiſh judges judged their people? He ſurely will; and therefore the earth, or all mankind, are invited to rejoice, becauſe he cometh to judge, not the elect, but the earth, or the world, which he ſhall do with righteouſneſs, and the people, or *peoples*, the ſame as all nations, with equity, Pſal. xcviii. 8, 9.—Some ſee nothing in the exerciſe of our Lord's judicial authority but wrath, and fiery indignation, to conſume his adverſaries without end, or the moſt diſtant proſpect of overcoming their moral and penal evil, with his goodneſs.

The uſe of the epithet *juſt*, as applied to Joſeph, the huſband of Mary, the mother of our Lord, ſhews plainly that it includes the moſt amiable virtues, and even the exerciſe of lenity and forbearance, in a caſe where he might act otherwiſe. "Joſeph, being a *juſt* man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately," Mat. i. 19. The divine law authorized him to make her a public example, in the ſituation in which he ſuſpected her to be; but the Holy Spirit commends him for determining to act a leſs ſevere part, and for that purpoſe employs even the term *juſt*. Does God approve of the conduct of Joſeph, in not availing himſelf of the proviſion of the law, but doing *himſelf juſtice* in a milder way; and ſhall he himſelf be eternally *inexorable to the groans and* cries of his wretched offspring, tho' they have

more powerful advocate than Moſes to plead their cauſe?" Pſal. cvi. 23. for he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt *all* that come to God by him, ſeeing he *ever* liveth---liveth *always* throughout the whole age, or period of his mediatory reign, to intercede for them, Heb. vii. 25. Joſeph of Arimathea is deſcribed as a *good and juſt man*; and are not theſe qualities inſeparable from the perfect character of God, and from the whole of his adminiſtration?

Such as have any acquaintance with the originals, know that the term rendered *righteous*, denotes *good*, *upright*, and even *merciful*, in which ſenſe it is applied to Chriſt, that righteous One. This is its uſual meaning, except when it is intended to denote a juſtified perſon, which ſhews that goodneſs and mercy are eſſential properties of a juſt perſon, and that, when theſe find no place, he ceaſes to be juſt. One of the Hebrew terms rendered *holineſs*, and its quality, or adjective form, *holy*, denote alſo *mercy*, *compaſſion*, *bounty*, *merciful*, *compaſſionate*, *bountiful*; and ſurely holineſs as a whole includes juſtice as an eſſential part. Can a man be merciful in his nature, and yet not pity the diſtreſſed, when preſented to his view, nay, determine that he will never pity them, nor uſe the leaſt effort to releaſe them, tho' near of kin to himſelf. What would we think of the merciful diſpoſition of ſuch a man?

If the above reaſoning be juſt, the advocates of the common doctrine, in their zeal and arguments to maintain the eternity of future miſery, in effect deny their Maker; for he will as ſoon ceaſe to exiſt, as ceaſe to be juſt and merciful, and to ceaſe to entertain thoughts of mercy towards the miſerable, and to expreſs them when a proper opportunity offers, is to ceaſe to be merciful. The mercy of God, unlike that of man, will never content itſelf with ſaying to the miſerable, "Be thou warmed, be thou clothed," while it refuſes what is neceſſary for that purpoſe, or only adds to the miſery of the wretched, for it watches for a fit ſeaſon to be gracious, whence it is repreſented as preſiding over the work of judgment, and the wicked as tormented in the preſence of the Lamb—If Joſeph's being a *juſt man* is aſſigned as a reaſon why he determined not to take advantage of the letter of the law againſt a woman whom he loved, is it not a hard caſe that his own guilty creatures will not permit the great Lawgiver, and the bleſſed Author of all exiſtence to be a *juſt God*, if he do not execute upon his own offspring, without end, abatement, or intermiſſion, all that wrath and fiery indignation which the latter of his law might import, or the malignity and demerit of ſin authoriſe! And is it not hard to brand every man as an heretic, with whom no faith is to be kept, and to whom no office of brotherly love, or even of common civility, is to be obſerved, if he come forth on the ſide of the Lord againſt the mighty, who daily miſrepreſent, calumniate, and blaſpheme his paternal character and works, and yet plead they are doing him excellent ſervice! But the churches and Chriſtians, that have recourſe to ſuch unſcriptural expedients, openly avow their pedigree and alliance, and leave no room to miſtake their deſcent. But many Chriſtians, that differ in ſentiment, are of a more noble ſpirit, and ſhew a laudable concern to follow the Lord fully. May their number, and mutual forbearance and attachment be daily increaſed! Let none ſuppoſe, *that our Maker's* venerable character, as *the juſt God and the Saviour*, *can ever be ſo ſeparated*, *as that* he may be the God of millions, countleſs as the ſand,

and the Father of their ſpirits, to whom he ſhall never prove a Saviour from guilt and miſery; for we have no right to ſeparate what he has indiſſolubly connected. The common ſyſtem allows him to be the God and Father of the wicked, in the above ſenſe, and none can diſprove it; yet excludes the connection and native conſequence; but the univerſal doctrine maintains both, as being agreeable to ſcripture, to the divine character there delineated, and to the whole tenor of the divine adminiſtration, in the preſent ſtate, as far as we have acceſs to know it.

Did the Univerſaliſts teach, that any were to be made happy, without previous holineſs, or that either holineſs or happineſs were to be attained, in a way that would diminiſh the declarative glory of God, depreciate the character, offices, and merits of the Saviour, or went to deny or ſupercede the renovating agency of the Holy Spirit, there would be ſome room for the horrid outcry ſo generally raiſed againſt them; but when none of thoſe can be proved to be the caſe, but the very reverſe, to what can that outcry be traced, if not to ignorance, the prejudices of education, and the power of bigotry, ſuperſtition, and clerical influence? Is it not baſe, is it not daſtardly, yea, is it not even criminal, to dreſs a doctrine in a fool's coat, before its merits be fairly tried, or in the ſkin of a wild beaſt, in order to expoſe it to ridicule, or to hunt it down by the half-thinking throng, the violence of clamour, and the unbridled perſecution of the tongue, which too often diſcharges, as from a bent bow, pointed and poiſoned arrows, inſtead of meeting the doctrine fairly on the candid baſis of ſcripture argument, and cool diſpaſſionate reaſoning? But many are very alert in handling theſe weapons who have not learned the proper uſe of this armour. It is an eaſy matter to ſtab a perſon behind his back, where he is neither warned, nor can defend himſelf; but does he not merit the character of a coward, and an aſſaſſin, who can be guilty of ſuch conduct? The judge, who proceeds to paſs ſentence before he hears a cauſe legally opened on both ſides, from a perſuaſion that he already knows enough of it to direct his deciſion, merits the character of an unjuſt judge, and attaches to himſelf, according to Solomon, ſhame and folly.—— But let me proceed to weigh ſome of the objections againſt the univerſal doctrine in the balance of truth and reaſon, in the ſcale of which, it is hoped, they will be found wanting in the conſequence commonly attached to them, inſtead of being concluſive againſt it.

If the ſcriptures adduced are of any weight to overturn the doctrine of endleſs torment, and eſtabliſh that of the reſtoration, every objection againſt the latter muſt, of courſe, be unfounded. But that I may not ſeem to evade theſe, let me ſelect the moſt material, and ſubjoin a ſolution.——If the doctrine of the reſtoration be true, it is urged, What becomes of the Lord's oath, who ſware in his wrath, that the unbelieving Jews, who periſhed in the wilderneſs, ſhould not enter into his reſt? Pſal. xcv. 11. Heb. iii. 11. That decried doctrine pays much more reſpect to Jehovah's oath, than the common one, which reduces it, from its plain and obvious meaning, to the ſtandard of a human ſyſtem. The Lord called the earthly Zion, the figure of the true church, his reſt, Pſal. cxxii. and, in alluſion to this, the true Jeruſalem from above, the mother *of all the faithful, is* the Lord's reſt, from which the univerſal doctrine

cludes all that deſpiſe the land of promiſe, and die impenitent, under the means of grace. Such muſt be ſtrangers to the reſt of faith on earth—cannot reſt in their diſembodied ſpirits with Chriſt after death----will have no part as citizens in the reſt of the New Jeruſalem, this being the excluſive privilege of the ſaints, and ſhall not aſcend with him and the church of the firſt-born to the higheſt heavens, after the work of final reſtitution, or univerſal reſtoration is over, this honour belonging only to thoſe who follow Chriſt in the reſtoration, the renovated earth being the deſtined portion of the ſecond-born. Thus we ſee how the wretched victims of the ſecond death can be reſtored to holineſs and happineſs, and yet the oath of God be true, in its full and literal import.

It is urged, that our Lord ſaid to the unbelieving Jews, "Whither I go ye cannot come," John viii. 21. whence ſome would infer that there can be no reſtoration, elſe this will not hold. The plain meaning of that ſaying appears to be, that they could not come whither he was going, without experiencing before hand a gracious change. Will any undertake to prove, that all to whom our Lord ſpake theſe words, periſhed in unbelief? that none of them were among the many thouſand Jews who were thereafter converted to the faith of the goſpel? And if they died in unbelief, they will not come where Chriſt now is, even in conſequence of the reſtoration, as I have ſhewed above. It is the excluſive privilege of the firſt-born to follow the Lamb of God whitherſoever he goeth, or to accompany him in his glorified human perſon, and to behold his face in righteouſneſs. What the father ſaid to the elder brother in the parable applies to them, and to them only, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," Luke xv. 31. Is not the proſpect of this ſufficient to excite a concern and emulation to be found ranked among the firſt-born, even upon the reſtoration ſcheme? Paul uſes language to the church at Corinth ſimilar to that of our Lord to the Jews. He gives us a catalogue of ſinners, who, he tells us, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 10. But to ſhew that it was not meant to exclude them from the benefit of repentance and pardon here, he adds, "And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified," &c. Permit me to obſerve here, that ſome think many will be reſtored in their departed ſpirits, who now die in unbelief, during the period between their death and the general reſurrection, who ſhall then be found in the Lamb's book of life, and ſo ſaved from taſting the ſecond death; but that, from this important privilege, all will be excluded who die impenitent, at leaſt amidſt goſpel light, under the guilt of ſuch ſins. Several things in Scripture ſeem to countenance this opinion, and it entered into the belief of ſome of the Chriſtian fathers.

It is likewiſe urged, that as in the future ſtate of miſery their worm is ſaid not to die, and that the fire *never* ſhall be quenched, Mark ix. 43, 46, 48.; therefore that miſery can never come to a period. This objection conſiſts of two parts which deſerve a ſeparate conſideration. Our Lord is allowed to have had in his eye that paſſage, Iſa. lxvi. 24. where it is expreſſed in the future, "for their worm *ſhall not* die, *neither ſhall* their fire be quenched." Mark has it in the preſent tenſe, which is not ſo ſtrong; for a fire may be now unquenchable, *that ſhall be extinguiſhed* hereafter. In the paſſage of the prophet, the worm *that ſhall not die is* connected with the carcaſſes of the men that had tranſgreſ-

ſed againſt the Lord. Such as live on the earth at the period referred to, are ſaid to go forth, and look upon theſe carcaſes, of which it is added, "and they ſhall be an aborring unto all fleſh;" ſuch would be their loathſome and unſightly ſtate. This plainly ſhews, that not the miſery of hell, but ſome great temporal calamity is intended. The Septuagint verſion has the ſame Greek word that we find in Mark, tranſlated worm, a farther proof, were any neceſſary, that our Lord had in view the words of the prophet.

Is it not obvious, that no more is meant by the worm not dying, than that they would continue to prey on the expoſed carcaſes of theſe tranſgreſſors, till all their nouriſhment ſhould be exhauſted, and nothing left but dry bones? Thus we ſee that there is no connection betwixt the worm that ſhall not die, and unceaſing miſery, but in the conceptions of men.—Our bleſſed Lord obſerves, in all his ſimilies borrowed from natural objects, a ſtrict analogy to the real nature of theſe objects, as appears from the whole goſpel hiſtory. But where ſhall the advocates of the common ſyſtem find that extraordinary worm in nature that ſhall never die, or on which the gift of immortality is beſtowed? and if they cannot find any ſuch worm, will they perſiſt in fathering an abſurdity on our Lord, by making him refer, in illuſtration of his doctrine, to a reptile that never did, and never ſhall exiſt? Let them point out any ſuch inaccuracies in his ſimilies or metaphors, if they can.

Our tranſlation fathers ſuch a phraſe on Mark, in the 43d and 45th verſes, as is ſufficient to ſhake the faith of an Univerſaliſt, till he look into the original; "to go into hell, to be caſt into hell, into the fire that *never* ſhall be quenched." In the Greek there is no word to correſpond to *never*, or to *ſhall be*, the phraſe being, εις το πυρ το ασβεστον, *into the inextinguiſhable*, or *unquenchable fire*. There is a very material difference between a fire being *unquenchable*, in the common and proper uſe of the word, and that it *ſhall never* be quenched. In the 46th and 48th verſes we have the preſent time, "where the fire is not quenched," or extinguiſhed. Theſe phraſes, taken even in the ſenſe pleaded for, does not neceſſarily imply, that the wretched victims ſhall be held in torment without end; for the flames that deſtroyed the cities of the plain and their inhabitants, continued to burn for many ages after they were placed beyond their reach; for a priſon may remain after the priſoners are releaſed. The unquenchable fire was prepared, and primarily intended, for *the devil and his angels*, and not for men, as our Lord atteſts, in the words of the final ſentence; which doubtleſs imports ſome diſtinction, of one kind or other. But waving ſuch arguments, the uſe of the phraſe in ſcripture, our unerring guide in ſuch caſes, and in common language, removes every ground of diſpute.

We have a phraſe almoſt ſimilar, Iſa. i. 31. "And the ſtrong ſhall be as tow, and the maker of it as a ſpark, and they ſhall both burn together, and none ſhall quench them." It may be rendered, with a little variation, "The mighty man ſhall be like tow, and his work as an ember, or live coal, and both ſhall be on fire together, and there ſhall not be any to extinguiſh." But when a ſpark or live coal meets with dry tow, tho' there ſhould be none to quench, will not the flame ſoon expire, having conſumed all the tow or flax within its reach?—*The Lord threatens, in language* equally poſitive, and even ſtronger than that,

Mark, to kindle a fire that ſhall not be quenched, when no more is intended than a ſevere temporal calamity. "But if ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jeruſalem on the Sabbath-day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it ſhall devour the palaces of Jeruſalem, *and it ſhall not be quenched*," Jer. xvii. 27. Does any one dream that theſe palaces continue to burn till now, or that they ſhall burn to all eternity, becauſe it is ſaid, *it ſhall not be quenched?* Is it not obvious, that no more is intended, but that they ſhould burn till they were conſumed; what we commonly mean when we ſay, ſuch and ſuch a fire could not be qenched, or was inextinguiſhable, till it devoured every combuſtible within its reach, notwithſtanding every exertion made to ſuppreſs and quench it. Language every whit as ſtrong is applied to the fire that was to be kept burning upon the altar, "The fire ſhall *ever* be burning upon the altar, it ſhall *never* go out," Lev. vi. 3. But was not that fire to ceaſe to burn, when the carnal ordinances, of which it made part, were to vaniſh or diſappear, by the New Teſtament diſpenſation? They were impoſed only till the time of reformation, Heb. ix. 10. When the ſtate of future miſery is called *a fire that is not quenched*, this may be intended to denote, that it ſhall exiſt and rage without end, for any thing that creatures can do to ſuppreſs it; and that it will not expire till it ſhall accompliſh God's purpoſe in kindling and preſerving it alive. And may not that fire be juſtly called unquenchable, which God alone can extinguiſh, though he may have determined at length to quench it?

If I recollect well, ſimilar expreſſions occur in the prophetic writings, to denote ſevere, tho' limited puniſhment, to deſcribe which the phraſe *everlaſting burnings*, and *eternal fire*, are employed. Let me, however, only direct your attention to what you will find to my purpoſe in the 34th of Iſaiah's prophecy. The Lord threatens, that in the day of his vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controverſy of Zion, the ſtreams of Idumea ſhall be turned into pitch, and its duſt into brimſtone, and that its land or territory ſhall become burning pitch, and that it ſhall not be quenched night nor day, that the ſmoke of it ſhall go up *for ever*, and that none ſhall paſs through it *for ever and ever*, which is explained by its lying waſte from generation to generation. The awful judgment thus threatened was inflicted in its ſeaſon, but has long ſince ceaſed to operate. Thouſands paſs thro' Idumea, for many ages paſt, with caravans of merchandize; and, in the ſequel of the chapter, the wild beaſts of the deſert, and the wild beaſts of the iſland are ſaid to reſt there, and ſeveral of the feathered tribes to poſſeſs it, which could not be the caſe did the country always burn, and the ſmoke of it go up *for ever*, as is threatened, ſeeing theſe creatures cannot exiſt in fire any more than man. Thorns are likewiſe ſaid to come up in its palaces, nettles and brambles in its fortreſſes, during the execution of the threatened vengeance, which the rage of that devouring element would not permit, were the whole territory always on fire. The following paſſages may be conſulted, as a farther proof that the phraſe, *ſhall not be quenched*, is not to be taken in the ſenſe commonly attached to it, when applied to future miſery; *2 Kings xxii. 17.* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 25. Jer. vii. 20. Ezek. xx. 47, 49. The

Jews were at no loſs to underſtand ſuch phraſes, that they meant no more than a fire that ſhould anſwer or perform the purpoſe intended.

John the Baptiſt tells us, that our Lord, in purging his floor, will *burn up* the chaff with a fire that ſhall not be quenched, Mat. iii. 12.; but does any one imagine that chaff will ſuſtain the unceaſing operation of fire? The object of kindling it is however ſerved, when the whole heap of chaff, that is ſweeped aſide from the threſhing floor, is conſumed. The ſcriptures repreſent the things that are to be gathered out of the kingdom, and caſt into hell, under the figures of *chaff*, *tares*, *dry trees*, *wood*, *hay*, *ſtubble*, and *things that offend*, or cauſe offence, and *work abomination*, and *make a lie*, or falſe pretences to religion. Theſe figures are very ſignificant and expreſſive, upon the hypotheſis of limited miſery, to repreſent how impenitent ſinners are fitted as veſſels of wrath for deſtruction, and that they are as unable to avoid or abide it, as theſe combuſtibles are to reſiſt or ſurvive the operation of a conſuming fire. But if the miſery of a future ſtate be properly eternal, more unapt figures to repreſent it could not be choſen.

If the worm, that is uſed figuratively to denote part of the torment of hell, denote, as is generally ſuppoſed, an evil and accuſing conſcience, conſtantly corroding and preying upon the damned, let the guilt of ſin only be taken away, by the peace-ſpeaking blood of Jeſus, and this worm muſt of courſe die, and the fire of divine wrath ceaſe to burn. I have dwelt the longer on this twofold objection, conſidering how much ſtreſs is laid upon it, and how averſe many are to give it up; let it be ever ſo clearly and fully anſwered. But is there any thing ſo pleaſant, and ſo grateful to the human heart, in the idea of the eternal torment of countleſs millions of their fellow-creatures, and ſome of them perhaps their neareſt relations, that men ſhould ſhut their ear, like the deaf adder, againſt every thing that can be urged from ſcripture to eſtabliſh the doctrine of the final reſtoration, even admitting they themſelves were in no danger of that torment? But are not many who make an outcry againſt that doctrine evidently in the bondage of corruption, and ſtrangers to the characters of God's elect, if his own word is to direct our judgment on that head. The man who does not wiſh to find the doctrine of the reſtoration true, and is not diſpoſed coolly to liſten to its evidence, let him pretend what he will, he is a ſtranger to the benevolent ſpirit of the goſpel, and has the pure and undefiled religion yet to learn. Reſerving an anſwer to ſome other objections to my next, let me conclude, at the time, by turning Agur's ſolemn caution into a prayer, ſeeing "every word of God is pure;" and that "he is a ſhield unto them that put their truſt in him;" may we be preſerved from adding to his words, leſt he reprove us, and we be found liars, Prov. xxx. 5, 6. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your cordial friend, &c.

LETTER XIV.

The ſervants ſaid unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he ſaid, Nay; leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up alſo the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harveſt. O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken! All things muſt be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moſes, and in the prophets, and in the Pſalms. Then opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures. Lydia, who worſhipped God, heard us; whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended unto the things which were ſpoken of Paul. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word, Your brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my name's ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified: but he ſhall appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed. Behold, I will make my words fire, and this people wood, and it ſhall devour them. Your ſins have withholden good things from you.—Jer. v. 14, 15. Mat. xiii. 28, 29—Luke xxiv. 25, 44, 45. Acts xvi. 14. Iſa. lxvi. 5.

Dear Sir,

WHEN Paul was a ſtrict Phariſee, he thought he ſhould do many things againſt the name of Jeſus, and continued in that mind till the Lord himſelf met him in the way to Damaſcus, and convinced him of his error. The ſpirit of perſecution, whether by word or deed, is always a mark, not of the true, but of the falſe church; as the propoſal to divide the living child diſcovered who was the real, and who the pretended mother. Whatſoever makes manifeſt is light; and that which ſerves as a fan to diſtinguiſh between the chaff and the wheat, Chriſt will not decline to take into his own hand. A variety of circumſtances concur to ſhew, that many profeſſed Chriſtians in the preſent day, would perſecute their brethren, if in their power, to impriſonment, exile, or even death, for profeſſing their belief of the univerſal doctrine, and attempting to propagate it. Does not this ſhew that they know not what manner of ſpirit they are of, and that their zeal is not of the right kind? It ſavours much more of the world than of the benevolent religion of Jeſus, and makes part of the old leaven of corrupt nature, which muſt be purged away, by the knowledge and cordial belief of the truth, before Chriſtians can become a new lump.

The ſervants, in the parable of the tares of the field, like the bulk of profeſſors in every age, were for rooting them up, at all hazard, ſo ſoon as diſcovered, but the Lord would veſt no ſuch power in any of his ſervants, well knowing how very unfit the very beſt of them are to uſe it aright. The ſervants in the parable, however, had ſo much ſelf-diffidence, as not to make the attempt of their own accord, and paid ſuch deference to their Maſter, as to aſk his permiſſion, which denied, they at once ſubmitted their own judgment to his, and gave up the attempt. But in this too few copy their example, whoſe zeal without charity, is more hoſtile to genuine Chriſtianity than even zeal without knowledge, tho' the latter is not ſeldom the parent of the former. If the ſervants ſuſpected the tares ſooner, they did not propoſe their extirpation till the wheat was in the ear.

and they had acceſs to perceive a viſible difference, upon narrowly examining both together. But few have the patience and candour to copy that cool attentive mode of procedure; and yet laudible as the motives of their zeal might be, the Maſter diſapproved, and poſitively forbade the propoſed exerciſe of it, Mat. xiii. 27—31. aſſigning a reaſon for his prohibition worthy of his own wiſdom and goodneſs.

But what ſhall we ſay of thoſe, who are at no pains to contraſt the tares and the wheat, or, like the noble Bereans, to compare the doctrines of men with the word of God, in order to form a proper judgment of them; but who raſhly attempt, and that in direct oppoſition to the plain injunction of the great Maſter, to eradicate whatever they are pleaſed, in their own wiſdom, to pronounce tares? What Nicodemus ſaid of perſons, applies alſo to doctrines, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?" The whole ſcripture hiſtory ſhews, that nothing more plainly indicates a bad cauſe than the attempts of its friends to ſupport it, by miſrepreſentation, reproach, and perſecution, rather than fair argument. And ſhould any have recourſe to thoſe carnal weapons that have a good cauſe by the hand, they do it a more material injury than is in the power of its avowed opponents.

Can that God who excels no leſs in goodneſs than in greatneſs, the Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh, be leſs offended at their maltreatment of each other for errors in judgment, than at their errors themſelves, admitting them to be ſuch, which may be the reſult of that very inquiry that proceeds from cordial love of truth? The former evinces that much of the old leaven remains to be ſtill purged out; while the latter is, in ſome meaſure, inſeparable from our preſent ſtate of imperfection, and will meet the compaſſion of the Father of lights. But theſe will be always the feweſt number; while the bulk, thro' ignorance, indolence, or intereſt, and the love of human praiſe, will leave themſelves the trouble of examining into the grounds of their religion, and of courſe be always of the eſtabliſhed faith. It deſerves their attention, that this very frame of mind would have ranked them among the perſecutors of the Son of God, had they lived in Judea, when he appeared among men, and will lead to reject him in every doctrine and duty that does not acquire the ſanction of cuſtom and public example, whence they ſhew themſelves deſtitute of, or very defective in that noble ſpirit that leads to follow the Lord fully.

The famous John Calvin, who was certainly a man of eminent talents and piety in his day, brought upon his own character, in the affair of Servetus, a ſtain, which the lateſt ages will not efface. The condemnation of that poor unhappy man hinged, it is more than probable, upon the judgment and advice of that reformer, who was repeatedly conſulted on the occaſion *. The treatment

* Dr Maclaine, in a note on his tranſlation of Moſheim, makes the following remarks on this unhappy affair.—"It is impoſſible to juſtify the conduct of Calvin in the caſe of Servetus, whoſe death will be an indeliable reproach upon the character of that eminent reformer. The only thing that can be alledged, not to deface, but to diminiſh his crime, is, that it was no eaſy matter for him to diveſt himſelf at once of that perſecuting ſpirit which had been ſo long nouriſhed and ſtrengthened by the Popiſh religion, in which he was educated. It was a remaining portion of the ſpirit of Popery in the breaſt of Calvin, that kindled his unchriſtian zeal againſt the *wretched Servetus*." The famous Knox, and other Scotiſh Reformers, who were doubtleſs

he received during his confinement, and while under ſentence of death, was abhorrent to humanity. To ſhut him up in chains, amidſt filth and vermin, to pine away even with hunger, after ſtripping him of all his caſh and jewels, till his emaciated body periſhed amidſt the flames, was adding cruelty to oppreſſion and murder. But need we wonder at all this, when we ſee a Proteſtant council, under the influence and direction of Proteſtant clergy, whom no intreaties could move, dooming a man to periſh at the ſtake, as the only elegible mean of eradicating his tares? But the belief that God himſelf inflicts unceaſing torment on his offspring for their errors, prepares the mind for ſuch deeds, and ſanctions them by the example of the Father of mercies. Did the ſervant and Maſter agree in ſentiment on that occaſion? "Ceaſe ye from man; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" But ſuppoſe not that I mean, by thus adverting to one fruit of blind zeal, to palliate Servetus's errors, ſome of which appear to be very groſs; but what errors can juſtify the commiſſion of murder, under colour of law, aggravated alſo by proſtituting religion into an accomplice of the horrid crime? Thus much, however, may be pleaded in their behalf, that they acted upon a principle, then univerſally admitted by Proteſtants as well as Papiſts, that tho' it is unlawful to perſecute any, for profeſſing the true religion, yet it is not only lawful, but even a duty to perſecute for error and idolatry, and that even to the death. This intolerant doctrine is vindicated in the writings of ſome of our reformers, than which, however, nothing can be more contrary to the precepts of the goſpel, or more dangerous in the hand of power.

How much more like our Divine Maſter did the late famous Frederic of Pruſſia act in a certain inſtance, than the Chriſtian divine upon the above occaſion! It is related of that prince, that one time examining, as his manner was, a number of petitions which had been preſented by ſome of his ſubjects, found one from the inhabitants of a certain diſtrict, earneſtly praying he would interpoſe his royal authority, to impoſe ſilence on a certain clergyman in their neighbourhood, who preached the doctrine of the final reſtoration. He returned the petition, with the following anſwer at the bottom, written with his own hand: "Having weighed the prayer of the above petition, I give my royal permiſſion to my loving ſubjects of ſuch a place, to be damned to all eternity, if they will; but at the ſame time interpoſe my authority to forbid them to moleſt any of my loving people, their neighbours, who are not willing to keep them company."

It would be well for the church, as well as for the people, did Chriſtian miniſters and people underſtand and defend the unalienable rights of man as well

men of eminent piety, drawing their model from the Genevan School, while they condemned perſecution for profeſſing what they deemed the true religion, juſtified the perſecution of Roman Catholics even to death, as being guilty of idolatry, and urged, in ſupport of their opinion, the laws and injunctions given to the Jews againſt idolaters. But theſe will by no means apply, our Lord having tolerated no ſuch thing in the goſpel kingdom.

Truth requires it ſhould be obſerved, that Socinus himſelf has been accuſed of perſecuting one Francis David, who was caſt into priſon, where he died, becauſe he rejected the worſhip of Chriſt, as inconſiſtent with the view that leader gave of his character. The perſecuting ſpirit, manifeſted in ſome of the reformers, diminiſhes the reſpectability of their characters, and inculcates the ſacred mandate, "Ceaſe ye from man." It muſt, however, be obſerved, that the nature of religious liberty was not then clearly underſtood, and the beſt of men find it difficult to *riſe above the prejudices of education.*

as this Prince. Many would doom truth to perpetual impriſonment, or ſtrangle her in the very birth, for no other reaſon, but becauſe they cannot, or rather will not recognize her ſanction from above, and be at due pains to trace the characteriſtic of the Father in the child. Often has the deformed, ſooty brood of a perverted underſtanding been fathered on the Father of lights, and the God of love, while his own fair progeny is branded as the offspring of Satan, the prince of darkneſs, and doomed to ſuffer exile from her Father's houſehold, as if an enemy to him and to all his children. They that are of God will, however, hear his words.—But it is time I ſhould proceed to anſwer ſome other objections to the reſtoration.

The following declaration of the prophet is thought to amount to a total denial of any ſuch event: "It is a people of no underſtanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour," Iſa. xxvii. 11. The obvious meaning ſeems to be, that he who gave them exiſtence as men, and formed them into a people or nation, by the indulgent care of his providence, would have no ſuch mercy upon them, as to exempt them from the execution of his judgments threatened by his prophets, and ſhew them no ſuch favour, as to continue their outward proſperity, after ſo often diſregarding his admonitions and reproofs. Such a threatening reſpected the Jews as a nation, and not as individuals, and ſeems to intend God's conduct towards them on earth, and not what they might be doomed to ſuffer in a future ſtate.—But granting the latter, a criminal may be ſaid to find no mercy, and to have no favour ſhewed him, when the ſentence of the law is executed. A parent may find it neceſſary to inflict the threatened correction on his child, and not to ſpare him for his cries, in which caſe the very thing denounced by the prophet takes place; but does that ſay that he ſhews no favour or mercy to his child ever after? He that ſpares the rod, hates his ſon; and the Lord forbears the exerciſe of mercy and favour, on certain occaſions, as conſiſting in the ſuſpenſion of the threatened judgments, that he may ſhew theſe to greater advantage thereafter. Was not this verified in the Chaldean captivity, and on other occaſions; and is there no reaſon to hope that it will be verified in their preſent long and awful diſperſion? The ſame thing will apply to the miſery of a future ſtate alſo, which is doubtleſs capable of being conducted on the ſame principle that appears in God's adminiſtration in the preſent ſtate. Give him time, and he can execute his threatenings, and alſo fulfil his promiſes in the experience of the ſame perſons; and we find the moſt literal promiſes ſometimes made to the very people who had been previouſly threatened with the ſevereſt judgments.

When the Engliſh reader finds in his Bible the wicked threatened with being tormented day and night *for ever and ever*; and that the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up *for ever and ever*; and that they have no reſt day nor night, Rev. xx. 10.—xiv. 11. he is led to think that theſe phraſes denote abſolute eternity, and therefore that the future miſery of the ſubjects of the ſecond death can never come to an end. But when we attend to the literal rendering of theſe and the like phraſes in ſcripture, and their limited import when applied to other ſubjects, we muſt ſee that there is no juſt reaſon for any ſuch opinion. In the two paſſages above *referred to*, the original phraſe, literally rendered, is, to or for the age of a

If *aion* or *ever* in the ſingular denote eternity, then this phraſe muſt ſignify, *to* or *for the eternities of eternities*; but we know that eternity is one, and that the reduplication of ever ſo many finite periods cannot amount to infinite duration. But both texts connect the *for ever and ever*, or ages of ages, to or for which the wicked are to be tormented, and the ſmoke of their torment to aſcend, with the continued revolution of day and night; a plain deciſive proof that abſolute eternity is not intended. When that ſhall commence, the viciſſitudes of day and night ſhall ceaſe, as Job teaches us, "He hath compaſſed the water with bounds, until the day and night come to an end; or, as on the margin, "until the end of light with darkneſs;" that is, till the end of the revolution of light in union with darkneſs ceaſe, Job xxvi. 10. Till then God's covenant with day and night ſhall ſecure their regular ſucceſſion; for which there is an appointed ſeaſon, as we are taught to believe. "Thus ſaith the Lord, If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there ſhould not be day and night in *their ſeaſon*," &c. Jer. xxxiii. 20. At the 25th verſe the ſubject is reſumed, and this covenant is called the appointed ordinances of heaven and earth; or rather, theſe, in their conſtant and orderly ſucceſſion, are the reſult of that covenant.

There is another circumſtance, worthy of notice, in the Revelation, which I wiſh you to examine for yourſelf. In chapter xx. 10. the devil is ſaid to be caſt into the lake of fire, where the beaſt and the falſe prophet previouſly are, and ſhall be there tormented *day and night for ever and ever*, ſo that the period even of their torment, is limited by the ſucceſſion of day and night, what can find no place in eternity. You ſee in the 14th chapter who will keep them company, during the ſame period: Thoſe who worſhip the beaſt and his image, and receive his mark in their forehead, or in their hand, or the mark of his name. We are told that the wicked, even all the nations that forget God, ſhall be turned into hell, *ſheol*, Greek, *hades*, the place where Dives was ſeen; and that whoſoever ſhall not be found written in the book of life, at the day of judgment, ſhall be caſt into the lake of fire, denoting the ſtate of future puniſhment, or the ſecond death, Rev. xx. 14, 15. Of all that lie in ignorance and unbelief, this awful miſery ſeems to be reſtricted to thoſe characters that we have deſcribed, chap. xxi. 8 and xxii. 15.

Paul may probably have the ſame thing in his eye in that black catalogue of ſinners, deſcribed 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. of whom he declares, that they ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God. Every ſin, without repentance, excludes from that kingdom; and thoſe who are guilty of the ſins there included, ſhall find mercy, if they are confeſſed and forſaken; for ſuch ſome of the believing Corinthians had been. What if this ſhould be the ſenſe, that thoſe who depart this life, under the guilt of any of theſe ſins, without repentance and pardon, ſhall infallibly be ſubjected to the ſecond death, and never be numbered amongſt the ſaints of the Moſt High, whoſe is the kingdom, a privilege that may lie open to other tranſgreſſors, till the day of judgment. Luke tells us, that many ſhall come from every quarter, and ſhall ſit down in that kingdom, even in its ſtate of glory, where *Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob* ſhall be ſeen, while others ſhall be *thruſt out*, Luke xiii. 28, 29. To this is ſubjoined a ſolemn declaration, often repeated in the

goſpel: "And, behold, there are laſt who ſhall be firſt, and there are firſt who ſhall be laſt," Matthew has this as the improvement of the parable of the labourers of the vineyard, Mat. xx. 16. All that enter the kingdom of heaven muſt have their names written in the Lamb's book of life before the day of judgment, and thoſe who have not, that were once firſt in point of privilege, and ranked among the children of the kingdom, by profeſſion, ſhall be among the laſt who ſhall enjoy a reſtoration. Thus we ſee that exceeding great is the number who are caſt into hell—all the wicked, all the nations that forget God; that many of theſe may have their names in the Lamb's book of life at the laſt day, whence they ſhall eſcape the ſecond death, and be numbered with the bleſſed; that certain claſſes of ſinners, if they die impenitent, ſhall certainly be puniſhed in the lake of fire; but that all theſe will not be tormented day and night for ever and ever, or for the ages of ages, which is the dread puniſhment reſerved for the devil, the falſe prophet, the beaſt, and thoſe who worſhip him, or his image, and receive his mark, and the number of his name, and, it would appear, for them alone. And yet their puniſhment, awful and laſting as it ſhall be, will come to an end, before the revolution of day and night ceaſe; plain proof that that puniſhment cannot be properly eternal.

Many think that what our Lord ſays, John iii. 36. entirely cuts off all hope of a reſtitution: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." This laſt clauſe holds true of every unbeliever in the preſent ſtate, who is condemned already; but does this abſolutely cut him off from the benefit of faith in the Son of God? The ſentence of condemnation may be reverſed, and the wrath which abides on him, in the ſtate of unbelief, removed. If the awful declaration is conſiſtent with ſuch a change on earth, it cannot be urged as a bar to the reſtitution; for faith in Chriſt, at whatever time it is given, will have the happy effect of removing the wrath that till then abideth on the ſinner.—In the preceding verſe the Father is ſaid to have loved the Son, and, as a proof and fruit of his love, to have given all things into his hand. In the next verſe we are told how the guilty creatures that are given into Meſſiah's hand, come to enjoy the fruits of his mediation, by believing on him; and the ſtate of all thoſe who believe him not, they ſhall not ſee life, they ſhall not enjoy any thing worthy of the name of life or happineſs, but remain under the wrath of God, or expoſed to all the dire effects of their unbelief and guilt. We have, in this verſe, the bright and the dark ſide of the cloud, and the means by which men paſs from death to life, receiving the record of God in the mouth of his Son, and that wrath will abide on the ſinner till he is brought to this, but no longer. It is worth obſerving, that the phraſeology in the two clauſes is changed, and ſtill more ſo in the original. In the firſt clauſe, it is believing *on* the Son, in the other not believing the Son, which laſt is a different word in the Greek, and includes the diſbelief of a perſon's meſſage, accompanied with obſtinacy, or the rejection of the true faith when propoſed, and that in the face of ſufficient evidence. This is the cauſe of the want of the obedience of faith, which adds rebellion to unbelief; and hence the Seventy employ a word derived from the Greek *verb as a tranſlation* of a Hebrew term that denotes rebellious. Nor

believe what our Lord ſays, when propoſed in its own native light, is unbelief, aggravated by contumacious diſobedience and rebellion, the guilt of which may not be purged away till God cauſe his wrath and fiery indignation to reſt upon the ſinner. Let ſuch as oppoſe the doctrine of the reſtoration lay this to heart; nor if it be of God, they ſhall be found fighting againſt him; and let them prove that it is not of God, if they can.

Some urge our Lord's interceſſory prayer, in the 17th of John, as concluſive, in their opinion, againſt the reſtoration. When they read, ver. 9. "I pray not for the *world*, but for them which thou haſt given me," they conclude that none but the elect have any intereſt in his mediation; but the concluſion is premature; for he prays for the world, ver. 23. Our Lord, in that prayer, firſt includes himſelf, then his immediate diſciples, thirdly thoſe who ſhould believe on him thro' their word, and finally, for the world at large. It is evident, from the 8th verſe, that he prayed for the diſciples only in the 9th, and not for the elect at large, as the objectors would have it. The connection in which our Lord brings in his requeſt for the world, merits ſerious attention; "that they may be made perfect in one, and that the *world* may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me." Here the world is prayed for as diſtinct from the elect, and ſaving faith is prayed for it, which is certainly included, in knowing the Meſſiah as the ſent of God, and in knowing the Father's love to the elect, to be the counterpart of his love to his own Son. If the world be brought to know all this, as diſtinguiſhed from the church of the firſt-born, then the world ſhall be ſaved, or reſtored by him. The church prays, reſpecting Meſſiah, "The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counſel," Pſal. xx. 4. In the ſecond verſe of the next Pſalm, ſhe makes the following grateful acknowledgment, "Thou haſt given him his heart's deſire, and haſt not withholden the requeſt of his lips." Here is abundant proof that the world, viewed as diſtinct from the church of the firſt-born, ſhall be brought to know God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he has ſent, which knowledge is the ſeed of eternal life; for our Lord expreſsly prays for it; and the church, by the Spirit, declares that the Father has not withheld the requeſt of his lips. Here the reſtoration of the world reſts on the ſame baſis as the ſalvation of the church, the interceſſion of Chriſt, as both are elſewhere founded on the merits of his death; and let none go about to oppoſe what is ſo eſtabliſhed. But this deſirable event ſhall not be accompliſhed, as we learn from our Lord himſelf in his prayer, till all the ſaints are made perfect in one bleſſed community. There is little of this at preſent, nor will it fully take place till the ſaints are glorified in the New Jeruſalem, at the period of the reſtitution of all things.—Solomon's prayer, at the dedication of his temple, was doubtleſs typical of our Lord's intercеſſion, as he himſelf was, 1 Kings viii. Let any one take the trouble of comparing it throughout with John 17th, and he will ſee a remarkable coincidence. Solomon's requeſt for the world, ver. 43. "Hear thou in heaven, that all people of *the earth may know* thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Iſrael," accords *with our Lord's petition* for the world at large, John xvii. 22, 23.

Some think that the terms *periſhing* and *deſtruction*, as applied to the wicked, *ut off all hope of* a final reſtoration. But if the application of theſe terms to

them prove any ſuch, it will be found to prove too much, and to cut off the hope of the righteous alſo.—Death of every kind is a periſhing and deſtruction; but, bleſſed be God, that to Jeſus belong iſſues, or deliverance from death.—Periſhing is applied to God's people, "The *good* or *godly* man is periſhed out of the earth; the righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart, Mic. vii. 2. Iſa. lvii. 1. Paul admits that one may be deſtroyed for whom the Saviour died," Rom. xiv. 15. We find that the Lord will ſay to thoſe he turns to deſtruction, "Return ye children of men," Pſal. xc. 3. We are alſo informed of the means, "He ſent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their deſtructions;" language comprehenſive enough to include the deſtruction of a future ſtate, and if God include it, none have a right to caſt it out, Pſal. cvii. 20. There is no deſtruction ſo great from which he cannot reſtore to life, beauty, and happineſs; for it is his prerogative to realize Samſon's riddle, by bringing meat out of the eater, and ſweetneſs out of that which is ſtrong and bitter.

Some find a formidable eternity in the little word *ſtill*, which they conjure into an impaſſable gulf around the regions of the damned, over which none ſhall paſs throughout all duration. This word denotes no more in Greek than *yet*, *as yet*, *longer*, *farther*, and may be applied to the paſt as well as to the future, when uſed in reference to ſomething elſe. The connection in which this word occurs, in the ſaying of the angel to John, makes it appear the more concluſive: "He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt *ſtill*; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy *ſtill*; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous *ſtill*; and he that is holy, let him be holy *ſtill*," Rev. xxii. 11. The plain meaning ſeems to be, that thoſe who are found unrighteous and filthy at the period referred to, ſhall remain ſo ſtill with regard to any benefit from that diſpenſation, which ſhall then terminate for ever, and under which alone the birth-right, and the bleſſing of the firſt-born could be attained. But there is nothing in the text that cuts them off from the benefit of the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, which ſhall be thereafter revealed, and during which all that continued unjuſt, or unrighteous and filthy under the former diſpenſation, ſhall be reſtored or made new. From that diſpenſation no mercy can be obtained, tho' it ſhould be ſought carefully with tears. Then, as the apoſtle James expreſſes it, "He ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy," James ii. 13. But that does not hinder the accompliſhment of the latter clauſe, without regard even to the ſame perſon, "and mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment," or, as on the margin, "glorieth over judgment!" Thus mercy bringeth up the rear of God's works, and covers them all as with an impenetrable ſhield.

The word *ſtill*, as applied to thoſe who ſhould then be found righteous and holy, denotes that they ſhall be then confirmed in a holy and happy ſtate, as the church of the firſt-born, whoſe portion is the inheritance of the ſaints in light, and whoſe eternal abode ſhall be the New Jeruſalem, of which they are the free indeed, or the ſacred and royal denizens. Thus their converſation, or, as the word imports, their citizenſhip is in heaven, while the new earth only ſhall be given to the children of men. No reaſon can be aſſigned why the former ſhould be ſtripped, at any period, of their holineſs and happineſs, an idea repugnant to

ſcripture and common ſenſe, and therefore no cauſe to reſtrict the word to its uſual meaning, as applied to the righteous: but many reaſons may be aſſigned, beſides the expreſs declarations of the word of God, why the latter ſhould not eternally remain filthy and wretched. Thoſe teachers in Iſrael, therefore, who tell their hearers, that the proſpect or intimation of deliverance to the wicked from hell, tho' at the end of a million of years, would make the joys of the bleſſed at once to ceaſe, ſpeak without authority, nay, more, contradict ſcripture, and the dictates of reaſon and common ſenſe.

It is truly ſurpriſing, that a ſingle word of five letters will carry conviction of the eternity of future torment to the minds of ſome, and all that God has ſpoken, by the mouth of all his holy prophets, ſince the world began, will not convince them that there will be a real reſtitution, or reſtoration of all things, Acts iii. 21. Martha having gone out to meet our Lord, when he came to raiſe her brother from the dead, Mary is ſaid to have ſat *ſtill* in the houſe, John xi. 20. But in a little ſhe alſo went out to meet Jeſus, which ſhews the folly of laying ſo much ſtreſs on a word, while the ſenſe in which it is uſed in different paſſages is overlooked. In common diſcourſe we ſay to a perſon, Sit *ſtill*, when we mean no more than to tarry a little longer. It is connected, John iv. 35. with a fixed period of time, "There are *yet* four months, and then cometh harveſt." The ſame Greek word, *eti*, is rendered, Rev. x. 6. *longer*; that there ſhould be time no longer." Here it applies to the completion or duration of a thing, as brought to an end. But the word rendered time, *chronos*, denotes properly, *delay*, *opportunity*, and the angel's ſolemn oath intends that no longer delay would be exerciſed towards guilty mortals, and that no farther opportunities would be given of working out their ſalvation, under a diſpenſation of grace and mercy then brought to an end. Thus they that are then unjuſt and filthy muſt remain ſo, till God is pleaſed to reveal another diſpenſation. Probably all the preceding part of time is but like a week to the years or ages that ſhall follow before Meſſiah ſhall conclude his reign. In John iv. 35. the particle alſo occurs, "There are *yet* four months, and then cometh harveſt;" where we ſee the word fixed to a certain limited period, and that not of long duration. And in the 42d ver. They ſaid to the woman, we no *longer* believe, &c.

The *for ever and ever*, or *the age of ages*, during which the ſmoke of the torment of ſome of the wicked is to aſcend, is ſpoken of, as we have already ſeen, as coeval with the ſucceſſion of day and night; but when eternity commences, the revolution of day and night, or the periodical interchange of light and darkneſs, ſhall ceaſe. Night is the figurative emblem of ignorance, ſin, and miſery, and will run parallel, in its ſucceſſive return, with their exiſtence. The return is neceſſary, as a period of reſt, to reſtore the exhauſted powers of man and beaſt. But when imperfection and miſery of every kind are done away, night will be ſuperceded, and for ever loſt, in the all-overpowering beams of celeſtial light. Accordingly, when Chriſt ſhall finiſh the whole work given him to perform, and deliver up his mediatorial adminiſtration to the Father, an eternal day of light, purity and bliſs will pervade all the works of God.

Thus we ſee the meaning of David's phraſe, Pſal. xxiii. 6. "I will dwell in *the houſe of the Lord for ever*," or "to length of days," as the original has

the margin renders it, even all the felicitating days of the ages of ages, which the ſaints ſhall reign with Chriſt. But all this is diſtinct from y, properly ſo called, which will not admit of the diurnal interchange it and ſhade, or of any diviſions of time whatever; for all will be then ided light, emblematical of the Father's abſolute reign of holineſs, felicity, re.—The following verſe of Addiſon defines the reign of day and night, boundary of time;

When nature fails, and day and night
Divide thy works no more,
My ever-grateful heart, O Lord,
Thy mercy ſhall adore.

ive dwelt the longer on this article, to evince that time ſhall extend to un- periods beyond the day of judgment, to which the word *ſtill*, as applied wicked, refers. This, with what I have advanced in anſwer to a preced- jection, proves, in my opinion, in the the cleareſt manner, that all miſery ave an end before time expire, or day and night finiſh their courſe. And a glorious jubilee will that be between the New Jeruſalem, and the new when every being in the univerſe ſhall be holy and happy, according to ure, and the rank aſſigned it in the ſcale of exiſtence! Then Jehovah e all in all.——May the Lord grant we may then have the honour and y to rank among the firſt-born, and ſhare the inheritance of the ſaints in

I am,
Dear Sir, &c.

LETTER XV.

anſwered, To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the rld, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth. Every one that is of the h heareth my voice.—Why do ye not underſtand my ſpeech? even becauſe ye not hear my word. And becauſe I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. ich of you convinceth me of ſin? And, if I ſay the truth, why do ye not eve me? Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſe- ate you from their company, and ſhall reproach you, and caſt out your name evil, for the Son of man's ſake. Your brethren that hated you, that caſt out for my name's ſake, ſaid, Give God the praiſe: we know that this s is a ſinner; we know that God ſpake unto Moſes: as for this fellow, know not from whence he is. The man anſwered, Now we know that d heareth not ſinners; but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth will, him he heareth. Behold, their ear is uncircumciſed: the word of the rd is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.—John xviii. 37. riii. 43, 45, 46. Luke vi. 22. John ix. Jer. vi. 10.

AR SIR,

he legal conſtitution of our country, the very worſt of felons cannot b *mned without* an open trial, and acceſs to offer, in their own defen

every plea in their power. Even when libelled in form, the law regards ſuch as innocent, till legally convicted of the crime or crimes laid to their charge. One would think, that whatever is the truth of God, and can ſubſtantiate its claim to that character, by ſcripture proof, would receive equal juſtice among profeſſed Chriſtians. Experience, however, ſhews, that this is far from being the caſe; for their law, or practice, often condemns a cauſe, and thoſe who eſpouſe it, before they hear the defence of the one, or inquire into the merits of the other. To fit them for this they need his Holineſs' pretended infallibility, which they diſclaim in words, but arrogate in fact, and that almoſt univerſally.—But tho' truth, like her divine Author, and all that would follow her fully, may be now condemned unheard, yet the Father of lights will not fail to make her cauſe his own, and every ſuch wanton ſentence ſhall be reviewed at his bar, to which there is always acceſs to appeal. When the profeſſed friends of truth become ſhy, and will ſcarce look her in the face, the Lord will raiſe up ſome to take her by the hand, whom he will make willing to go without the camp, bearing her reproach.

I cannot help wondering at the expreſſions I ſometimes meet with in authors that maintain the eternity of future miſery, and that all mankind will be unavoidably ſubjected to it, but the elect, that little flock. A very voluminous and famed writer of this deſcription tells us, that our Redeemer's mercy is as unbounded as his power; and it muſt indeed be ſo if both are equally infinite. But how can it be ſo, if the far greater part of his guilty miſerable creatures be entirely excluded, by an irrevocable decree of reprobation, from all poſſibility of ever acquiring any intereſt in his ſaving mercy, which, in that caſe, can have no reſpect to them or their miſery? How to reconcile the following ſentence with the above view of the divine adminiſtration, I am utterly at a loſs: "Unbounded is the mercy of that God of grace with whom we have to do; he is averſe to puniſh with ſeverity, and opens his arms and heart to receive the moſt enormous tranſgreſſors, who attempt returning to him by faith *." In ſo ſaying, the worthy author ſeems to have forgot the leading points of his own ſyſtem.

I find the following obſervation in Dr Horne's Paraphraſe on the 110th Pſalm, ver. 3. The words of the laſt clauſe may be rendered, "More than the dew from the womb of the morning is the dew of thy progeny;" that is, "Thy children, begotten to thee thro' the goſpel, ſhall exceed in number, as well as brightneſs and beauty, the ſpangles of early dew." If ſo, can any of the human race be excluded from the benefit? for all taken together, cannot exceed in number the ſpangles of early dew. The ſame author has a beautiful ſentiment on Pſal. cix. 29. "God hath bleſſed his Son Jeſus, and thro' him all nations, who have been adopted into his family, yea, and they ſhall be bleſſed, and enter, by thouſands and millions, into the joy of their Lord, while his enemies ſhall have no covering, but their own ſhame and confuſion." If he hath adopted all nations into his own family, even all the nations that God ſhall call into exiſtence, without excluding ſo much as a ſingle family; then, tho' ſhame and confuſion *will cover ſome for a long* ſeaſon, yet have we reaſon to believe this will lead to

* *Mr Brown's Reflections* upon Jer. chap. iii.

a repentance not to be repented of. The ſending the rod of Meſſiah's ſtrength out of Zion, is connected with his ruling among his enemies, even all his enemies, as our metrical verſion has it, which implies their voluntary ſubjection to him. The figure of the dew is alſo connected with the day of his power, in which his people are to be willing; and what day of power more glorious than that of the reſtitution of all things, to which that period, in its ultimate acceptation, may refer? The learned and pious Biſhop makes our Lord expreſs what we have, Pſal. cix. 30. and thinks it of the ſame import with what we have, Pſal. xxii. 22. and cited by Paul, Heb. ii. 11. "I will praiſe him among the multitude; for both he that ſanctifieth, and they who are ſanctified, are all of one; for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren, ſaying, I will declare thy name unto *my* brethren, in the midſt of the church will I ſing praiſe unto thee." In Pſal. xxii. 22. it is *congregation*, here *church*; but the original term is applied to any aſſembly, even the diſorderly one at Epheſus. Chriſt ſtands related as a Father and Brother to every human being, and is Kinſman-redeemer not only to the firſt-born, but alſo to all the younger branches of the great family of man. He and they are all of one prior to their being ſanctified; for which cauſe he is not aſhamed even then to call them brethren. Is not this the moſt noble and endearing method of conquering the enmity of the human mind?

Henry the VI. of France is ſaid to have had this maxim frequently in his mouth, "The ſatisfaction derived from revenge is only momentary; but that which is to be gained from clemency, laſts for ever?" Of one of his nobility, who was known to bear him an implacable hatred, he was heard to ſay, "I wiſh to do him ſo many ſervices, as to force him to love me!" The common doctrine will not allow our Maker to act with this princely benevolence towards his greateſt enemies, whom it repreſents as bowing the knee to him only from mere compulſion on his part, while the enmity remains and increaſes for ever. The worſt of men may thus conquer their enemies; but God ſubdues his in a manner more worthy of himſelf, and will not deny himſelf that honour and pleaſure to gratify all the bigots on earth. Let ſuch go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice, Mat. ix. 13. After ſo high an authority, let me recommend to their attention the ſaying of an eminent king, who himſelf added, to the dignity of the prince, the laurels of the hero.——

"Heroes may conquer, but it's God forgives *."

The connection between ſin and miſery, and the reaſon and end of God's viſiting for it, are expreſſed by himſelf, in a remonſtrance with his ancient people: "Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee; know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts," Jer. ii. 19. Why ſhould theſe ends, ſo worthy of God, be excluded from the puniſhment of ſin in the ſtate to come?

Some view what is ſaid of the wicked, Pſal. xlix. 19. "He ſhall go to the generation of his fathers; they *ſhall never* ſee light," as an inſuperable bar to the

* *Frederick III.* late king of Pruſſia.

reſtoration. After examining the original word *nezach* or *netſach*, in its various forms of noun, verb, and participle, in Parkhurſt's Hebrew Lexicon, I can find nothing which appears to me to juſtify our tranſlation. He tells us that it denotes, in general, *ſuperiority, being above, over*, or *beyond*. As a verb, abſolutely, that it imports *to be over*, or *preſide over*, and as a noun, *ſuperiority, excellency, maſterly, victory*. It occurs, Lam. iii. 18. and is rendered *ſtrength*, "My *ſtrength* is periſhed from the Lord," or *ſuperiority, excellence*. It occurs alſo, Iſaiah lxiii. 6. and our verſion has it, *ſtrength*, but it might be rendered as above, "I will bring down their *excellency* or *ſuperiority*, to the earth." It is alſo to be met with, Iſa. xxv. 8. and is there rendered victory, "He will ſwallow up death *in victory*," *le nezach*, to victory, or till it is entirely deſtroyed. I find, indeed, that Pagninus renders that phraſe, *for ever*, and the old verſion of the Engliſh Bible, *for evermore*. This reaſon is aſſigned by ſome, becauſe eternity, ſay they, will ſubdue all things. If ſo, then ſin, Satan, and miſery cannot ſurely reign and torment without end. In Job xxxiv. 36. it is connected with *gnad*, which is one of the words that the friends of the common doctrine plead, denotes eternity alſo, ſo that both words taken together, muſt denote, according to them, eternity in the moſt abſolute ſenſe, or indeed, a twofold eternity. "My deſire is that Job may be tried *unto the end*." It may be literally rendered as a prayer, "My Father, let Job be tried unto the end," or, till he is ſubdued, or forced to give up his pleas, that ſerve to defend and juſtify wicked men. The laſt clauſe ſhews this to be the ſenſe; but will any one ſuppoſe, that Elihu prayed that Job ſhould be tried to all eternity, or, in other words, puniſhed in hell without end, for not yielding to the arguments of his friends. This muſt be the import of his requeſt, if the ſenſe of the term pleaded for be juſt. Parkhurſt, with ſpecial reference to the above paſſage, renders the two words, *yet further*; and he muſt be allowed to be a competent judge. The text, on which the objection is founded, might be then rendered, "He ſhall go to the generation of his fathers, where they ſhall not ſee light *yet farther*; or, according to the plain meaning of the phraſe, if *nezach* be taken as a particle, *even till they are ſubdued*; if as a noun, *even till the victory or maſtery* over them.

But taking the phraſe in their own ſenſe, which the uſe of the terms by no means juſtifies, it will not import unceaſing miſery. Pagninus renders it, in the above text in Job, *uſque in ſeculum*, even to the age; and in the 49th Pſalm, ver. 19. *uſque in eternum*, even to eternity, but on the margin he has *ſeculum*, the age. Biſhop Hare alſo renders it, "They ſhall not ſee light to eternity; and I find that ſome other verſions render it in the ſame manner; but it is evident that their authors uſe *age* and *eternity* as ſynonimous terms, and affix to both the modern meaning. But even the phraſe *to eternity* does not cut off the idea of limited miſery; for when it is ſaid that ſuch a thing will continue to a certain period, it is not meant to denote unceaſing continuance. But the language of the Pſalmiſt, ſo far from overturning the doctrine of the final reſtoration, affords an additional proof of its truth; for it gives good reaſon to expect a period when thoſe who leave this ſtate unſubdued, by divine grace, ſhall be *reduced to a ſtate* of voluntary ſubjection to their rightful Lord, in conſequence *of which they ſhall* ſee the light of perfect holineſs and felicity, when Jeſus ſhall

make all things new, for which the light of the goſpel, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, ſhall prepare them.

When an Engliſh reader finds in his Bible that ſome ſhall be puniſhed with *everlaſting* deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord; and that the inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities about them, are ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire, and alſo that the fallen angels are reſerved in *everlaſting* chains, unto the judgment of the great day, he finds himſelf at a loſs to reconcile theſe expreſſions to the idea of limited puniſhment, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. Jude, ver. 6, 7. I have already ſhewn, when remarking on Mat. xxv. 46. Theſe ſhall go away into *everlaſting* puniſhment, that the original term rendered *everlaſting*, *eternal*, can have no ſuch meaning annexed to them in ſcripture, as is now attached to them in common language. Seeing the original word, from which the quality, or adjective form, is derived, denotes no more than an age, diſpenſation, or hidden period, the derived word muſt not, cannot be ſtretched to a meaning, of which the original term itſelf does not admit. The terms *everlaſting*, *eternal*, therefore, denote no more, according to the ſtrick analogy of language, than what belongs to the age, diſpenſation, or hidden or unknown period. That period may be of long or ſhorter duration, but cannot properly be eternal, as our Engliſh verſion of the ſcriptures itſelf ſufficiently atteſts. Everlaſting deſtruction, then, is a miſery that will endure throughout a period, tho' limited, known in its full extent to God only. The eternal fire, the vengeance of which the cities of the plain are ſaid to ſuffer, cannot mean the future miſery of the wicked inhabitants; for that is hid from the eyes of mortals, and therefore cannot be ſet forth for an example or warning to mankind, as that vengeance is however ſaid to be. But the dread cataſtrophe of theſe cities, and the continued burning of the lake formed in their ſite, for many centuries, was an awful warning to all the nations of the then known world, who muſt doubtleſs have heard of it. Thus to be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, is to be ſubjected to the awful miſery of that unknown period, during which the ſecond death ſhall reign; and to ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire, is to be ſet forth, as Jude expreſſes it, as an example of God's juſt abhorrence of ſin, and determined purpoſe to puniſh it, by the dreadful fire which conſumed the cities of the plain, and every thing in them, by which the face of the whole country was converted into a flaming lake, which continued to burn, as the Jewiſh hiſtorian atteſts, for above two thouſand years. Thus it was an awful figure and earneſt of hell itſelf; but it has long ſince ceaſed to burn.

A grievous calamity is often called fire in ſcripture, to denote its terrible and conſuming nature. The words *eternal* and *everlaſting*, which are the ſame in the original, are ſometimes added, and alſo the phraſe, *which ſhall not be quenched*, to import the completeneſs and permanency of its effects. Inſtances of this often occur, as in Iſa. xxxiv. and in chap. xxxiii. 14. "Who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us ſhall dwell with *everlaſting* burnings? Biſhop Lowth views theſe queſtions as uttered by the wicked Jews, in the form of complaint or murmuring, when God was correcting them, by the devaſtations of Sennacherib, who burnt up their cities and villages, and not as having *any reference to the miſery* of a future ſtate. Tho' the word everlaſting occ

in ſcripture about ninety times, yet thoſe who have been at the pains to examine, aſſure us, that it is to be found only five times connected with future puniſhment, Dan. xii. 2. Mat. xvi. 8. and xxv. 41, 46. 2 Theſſ. i. 9. It occurs only once in that connection in the Old Teſtament, the above paſſage excepted, and four times in the New. The word eternal, which is the ſame in the original, is computed to occur about forty times, between text and margin, in the whole Bible; yet only once in relation to future puniſhment, Mark iii. 29. In none of theſe places can they be proved to import unlimited duration; and indeed, how can they, ſeeing the term that gives them all their meaning, imports only a period of time that has had a beginning, is elapſed, or ſhall have an end. I have excepted Jude, ver. 7. for a reaſon already aſſigned, as not intending future puniſhment. Theſe terms often occur in the courſe of a ſingle ſermon, in relation to future miſery, in the courſe of a ſingle ſermon, ten times for once it is to be found in that connection in the whole Bible; for the greater part of the ſacred writers never once mention them in any ſuch ſenſe. Is this a Proof that the ſcriptures appear every where to teach never-ceaſing puniſhment?

The reſtraint put upon evil angels is called *everlaſting* chains; but the leaſt attention to ſcripture and fact is ſufficient to ſhew that theſe chains are not endleſs. They are ſaid in the text to be reſerved in them only *unto* the judgment of the great day. Thoſe chains allow them now to go to and fro in the earth, and to walk up and down in it, allow their very chief to go about as a roaring lion ſeeking whom he may devour, and to deceive the nations. But the chains in which he and his angels will be bound at the laſt day, and even during the millennium, will be ſhort enough to confine him to his own den. This is proof enough that the former chains are not to be *everlaſting*, in the proper ſenſe of that word.

Some argue, that as the threatening of eternal or endleſs miſery, is, in their opinion, the moſt effectual reſtraint upon the commiſſion of ſin, that therefore it is worthy of God, or indeed binding on him, both to threaten and execute this, as a check to ſinners now, in their mad career of iniquity. God cannot be bound to lay the greateſt reſtraint upon the ſinner, and ſcripture and fact atteſt that he does not. Did he diſcover the ſtate of the damned, naked and open to the ſinners eyes, tho' but for ever ſo ſhort a period, this would be a more effectual check than the threatenings of endleſs miſery. Or did God ſtrike the ſinner inſtantly dead, upon the commiſſion of this or that crime, this would operate more effectually ſtill, as a check upon ſinners. So much is plainly implied in that paſſage, "Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil," Eccleſ. viii. 11. In the caſe of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. we ſee the effect of the ſpeedy puniſhment of an evil work, "Great fear came on all them that heard theſe things," ver. 5. God acts, however, towards his intelligent creatures, like a wiſe moral governor; but ſuch a conſtant interpoſition of his power would at once deſtroy all moral agency, and baniſh every thing like real *virtue and piety* from the earth.

Say ſome, are not the terms *eternal* and *everlaſting* applied to God himſelf, and muſt we not then underſtand them as denoting proper eternity? This appears very ſpecious at firſt ſight, and is calculated to impoſe upon a perſon that has not examined the argument. Becauſe there is no neceſſity of reſtricting theſe words when applied to the Supreme Being, whence the mind naturally views them, in that connection, as importing endleſs duration; let us not thence raſhly conclude, that they muſt be taken in an unlimited ſenſe, when they relate to the future ſufferings of the wicked. We find the ſame words applied often in ſcripture to things that were never meant to exiſt without end, and that have long ſince come to a period; ſuch as *everlaſting mountains*, *perpetual hills*, an *everlaſting prieſthood*, as aſcribed to Aaron's family; the land of Canaan, as an *everlaſting poſſeſſion to the Jews; the earth enduring for ever; the earth, with her bars*, being about Jonah for *ever*, when in the belly of the fiſh; and the covenant of circumciſion as *everlaſting*, &c. If the annexing of theſe words to ſuch things renders them eternal, then the ſcriptures are broken, and the Levitical ritual muſt remain ſtill in force, and Jonah muſt be ſtill in the whale's belly, &c. &c. all theſe with which the terms *everlaſting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, and *for ever and ever*, are connected, muſt endure as long as God himſelf exiſts. But if all theſe terms and phraſes are often uſed in ſcripture evidently in a limited ſenſe, by what law are they underſtood to mean unceaſing duration, when applied to future miſery? Have we got a better rule to judge of the meaning of ſcripture terms and phraſes than the ſcriptures themſelves? or are we ſo keen to get the far greater part of God's intelligent offspring tormented to all eternity, that we are determined to pay no reſpect to the teſtimony of the Spirit on the head, and to explain the words always, when applied to future puniſhment, in an unlimited ſenſe, notwithſtanding the numerous examples he has given us, in his word, of their limited import? Were God as devoid of mercy as man, not excepting the beſt of men, eternal miſery would certainly be the portion of the guilty.—The Jews would monopolize their Meſſiah to themſelves, making him to conquer them at their head, only to give them univerſal dominion, excluding all the nations from the very crumbs that fell from their own table, not allowing them ſo much as the privilege of dogs in their common Father's great houſehold. This ſpirit led them to renounce Meſſiah, when he came, and iſſued in their own rejection from all the privileges of his kingdom, in which ſtate they continue to this day. Need we wonder that the Jews are ſo deſpiſed by all the other nations of the earth, when they were ripe for murdering their King and Saviour? and need we wonder that profeſſed Chriſtians ſhould be ſtrenuous advocates for a doctrine that dooms all the non-elect, old and young, to endleſs wo, when we reflect that ſo many among them can find in their heart to grind the faces of the poor, and put the price of blood in their coffers, without ever coming the length of Judas's repentance; and that the great group of profeſſed Chriſtians ſupport a ſyſtem which dethrones and crucifies the Son of God, and provides him a grave in their garden, ſealing the ſtone and ſetting a watch? If they call the truth of this in queſtion, let deeds atteſt, which will not be forgotten in the day of the Lord's viſitation. And may I not remark, that the tacit

approbation of profeſſed Chriſtians of the degrading ſervitude of many myriads of their brethren, and the active part too many of them take in it, argues the ſame unfeeling, unchriſtian ſpirit *.

And what are the bulk of profeſſed Chriſtians but myſtical Jews, that tread in the ſteps of their ancient brethren, and take upon them to pronounce an irrevocable doom, to never-ceaſing miſery, upon all nations, a very few individuals ſelected from among them excepted? Let them beware, leſt this be the preſage and prelude, as in the caſe of the Jews, of their own future expulſion from the church of Chriſt, and excluſion from his heavenly kingdom.

What a poor idea muſt they have of the proof of God's eternity, and, of courſe, of the proof of his exiſtence, who think it depends upon, or can be affected by, a word, made ſo variable in its import in our tranſlation, that we ſcarce know what to make of it! The eternity of God needs no proof; for, his being once admitted, this follows as a neceſſary conſequence. The words *eternal* and *everlaſting*, as applied to God, are generally, if not always, to be viewed as chiefly expreſſions of ſome property of his mediatory adminiſtration, and not as importing the endleſs duration of his being. Thus, in Iſa. ix. 6. it is applied to Chriſt, "his name ſhall be called the *everlaſting Father*;" in the original, *the Father of the age*. That this is not a title of nature, but of office, is evident, from the connection in which it ſtands, and from this, that there cannot be two fathers eſſentially eternal. But Chriſt preſides over the whole period of time, in which he acts as a Father, in calling creatures into being, in

* The writer was very much ſtruck in meeting lately with an extract, ſaid to be from a letter written by the famous Dr Smollet, to a clergyman of his acquaintance, a few months before his death. It is ſo ſeaſonable and important, that no apology is neceſſary for giving it a place. After giving his opinion of the ſtate of ſome of the principal kingdoms in Europe, and of our then American colonies, an opinion which has ſince been remarkably realized in great part, he proceeds:

"To turn our eyes towards our Weſt India Iſlands, I think the proſpect looks ſtill more gloomy and alarming. It has ever excited my aſtoniſhment, that no body, either in England or thoſe iſlands, ſhould entertain the leaſt dread or forecaſt of the dangerous conſequences of introducing ſuch an immenſe multitude of African ſlaves into them, or the ſmalleſt compunction for the enormous wickedneſs of the act, exaggerated as it is a thouſand degrees, by being perpetrated by men whoſe nation ſets ſo high a value upon their own liberty, and who pretend to ſuch an averſion to deeds of cruelty. If we have no apprehenſion of the vengeance of Divine juſtice, for the countleſs and horrid barbarities, which are conſtantly exerciſed on the miſerable ſlaves of thoſe colonies, ſtill common ſenſe ought to teach us, there is a point beyond which human affairs cannot go. That it is not poſſible that ſuch numbers, who poſſeſs every day they live the power of their own freedom, will ſuffer ſuch extremities for ever. That the *blow muſt come at ſome period or other*, which may be this year as well as the next; and that when it does come it brings with it deſolation impoſſible to be withſtood, and death in every ſhape. That a revolt of the ſlaves muſt happen before many years, I will venture to predict; and if it ſhould happen in one iſland, to whatever European nation it belongs, *the Weſt Iſdia Iſles will never afterwards be in a ſtate of ſafety*."

Theſe remarks are founded in reaſon and in truth, and are but too predictive of the horrors which have been of late years realized in St. Domingo. The fate of Pharaoh and his kingdom ſhould never be forgotten. The great Governor among the nations, who has made them *all of one blood*, the ſooty African, as well as the fair but proud European, and ſtands equally related to them all, is ſtill the ſame. His ear is not ſlow to hear the groans of any deſcription of his miſerable creatures, nor are his eyes ſhut to their woes. Tho' his juſtice may ſeem tardy to ſtrike the threatened and earned blow, to give ſinners time and warning to repent, or, if they will not, their cup time to fill; whence their hearts are too often ſet in them to do evil; yet when he begins, his juſtice will make ſure work, and ſtrike the tranſgreſſors home, that all men may know and acknowledge, to the praiſe of his grace, that verily there is a God *who ruleth and judgeth in the earth*.

making paternal provision for them, and exercising paternal care over them, and also by begetting, or creating sons and daughters to God, by the gospel. In Jer. x. 10. we have *everlasting King*, in the original *King of the age*, which must have a reference to our Lord's mediatory reign, the duration of which, in one view, may be considered as one great age, or an eternity, in a qualified sense. But if we render *gnolam* by the English word *eternity*, then Christ cannot be called either the King or the Father of it, because these are mediatory titles as applied to him, and eternity, as connected with the being of creatures, commences with the Father's reign, when the Son shall have delivered up his delegated kingdom. We may however observe, that when the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, and the like, occur, connected with subjects that in their own nature do not make it necessary to restrict them to their usual meaning, let us extend their import as much as we please, no danger can follow; but there is nothing in the nature of future punishment that can justify such extension beyond the obvious sense of the original terms, but much every way to make our adherence to that sense necessary.

The epithet *eternal* or *aionian* is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. probably because he is the efficient agent under Christ, in carrying on the great work of regeneration, throughout the whole period over which he, as the head over all things to his church, presides. His official qualifications, and miraculous works, are ascribed to the Spirit. But some understand, by *eternal Spirit*, in the above passage, our Lord's divine nature, which served as an altar to sanctify the gift that he presented to God as a priest; but, tho' this be true, the other sense agrees perfectly with the assistance he derived from the blessed Spirit in all his work.

The words *eternal* and *everlasting*, in scripture, have often a plain reference to our Lord's mediatory reign, and when the term *life* is annexed, seem to denote the glory and felicity of the New Jerusalem state. The rendering of it so in our version often obscures the real sense of many a passage. Thus we read, "according to the *eternal purpose* which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," Eph. iii. 11. literally, According to the *pre-arrangement of the ages*, which he made or framed by Christ Jesus; the original phrase being κατα προθεσιν των αιωνων. The Greek prepositon προ, denotes an orderly antecedence with respect to time, or regular order and publicity, in regard of place. The Seventy apply the word to the shew-bread, as it is commonly called, from whom the Apostle probably borrowed his expression προθεσις των αρτων, *the setting in order*, or *the public placing of the loaves*, which were laid in two equal rows, of six each, upon the sacred table. The Evangelists have it αρτι της προθεσεως, literally, *loaves of setting before*, or *of placing in order*. But how would it answer to render it, in the one place, *be purpose of loaves*, and in the other, *the loaves of purpose?* This would be adhering exactly to our translation, which has *eternal purpose*, instead of *the pre-ordering*, or *pre-arrangement of the ages*. Paul uses, in the above text, Eph. iii. 11. ποιησας, which our translators rendered *purposed*, to agree, to purpose; but the verb signifies, *to make*, or *frame with care and attention*, as an artist does a piece of work, or a poet a poem, both terms poet and poem being formed from

the ſame verb. The ſame tenſe of the verb occurs in the ſame connection, Heb. i. 2. "by whom alſo he *made the worlds*," Greek, *made, framed*, or *arranged the ages*. We find alſo the ſame ſentiment, chap. xi. 3. "By faith we underſtand that the *worlds* were *framed* by the word of God," literally, that the *ages* were *adjuſted*, &c. Says Parkhurſt, "The proper original ſenſe of the word is, *to compaſs*, or *knit together*, either *members in a body*, or *parts in a building; to adjuſt, adapt, diſpoſe*, or *prepare with great wiſdom and propriety*." This wiſe diſpoſition of the ages, and the various works to be performed in them, is expreſsly aſcribed to Chriſt, in the other paſſages; and why ſhould he not be underſtood here, as intended by *the Word of God*, a title elſewhere given him? Thus, in many places, our words *everlaſting* and *eternal*, if juſtly rendered from the original, would be found to convey no ſuch meaning as an Engliſh reader is naturally led to annex to them. The mind of the Spirit is thus often obſcured, or entirely concealed, by the periphraſtic mode of tranſlating the original, where ſuch terms occur, and the difficulty of underſtanding the ſcriptures is of courſe greatly increaſed †.

† The writer would by no means be underſtood as intending to depreciate the valuable labours of the tranſlators of the Scriptures. But whatever deference is due to their judgment, they were but men, and we have a command in ſcripture to ceaſe from man, even from the beſt of men, and follow them no farther than they follow Chriſt. The works of the wiſeſt of men muſt partake, more or leſs, of the infirmities of their authors, and always afford room for correction and improvement to thoſe that come after them. We may give men their due, tho' we do not exalt them above their Maker. Muſt we not admit, that the following addreſs of our Lord to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? John ii. 4. appears much more decorous in this literal verſion of the original, "What is that to thee and me woman?" as if he had ſaid, It is not your province and mine, who are but gueſts at the entertainment, to trouble ourſelves about a freſh ſupply of wine. I recollect a ſimilar expreſſion in Anacreon, that requires to be ſo rendered, but too ſlight an authority to juſtify ſo harſh an expreſſion. It was uſual to addreſs ladies of the higheſt diſtinction, even queens and princeſſes, by the original term rendered *woman*; and in ſome modern languages it is the moſt reſpectable addreſs of a child to a parent.

Time itſelf produces a great change on the import of plain terms and phraſes. The obſolete verb *wiſt*, ſo often uſed in the Old and New Teſtament, frequently obſcures the ſenſe to an Engliſh reader. That ſaying of Paul, "I *wiſt* not that he was the high-prieſt," Acts xxiii. 5. would be more clear, if rendered, *I did not know him*, or *I did not acknowledge him to be the high prieſt*. The ſame may be ſaid of this expreſſion, "I *wot* that thro' ignorance ye did it," Acts iii. 17. *I know that ye did this deed thro' ignorance*. What idea will moſt readers annex to this phraſe, "Moreover, brethren, I do you *to wit* of the grace of God," &c. 2 Cor. viii. 1.—*Now*, brethren, we *inform* you of the grace of God beſtowed on the churches of Macedonia; or, as it might be rendered, Given by the churches of Macedonia; grace intending an inſtance of liberality, as a fruit and evidence of that divine principle which is ſaid to be of God, as being a fruit of his grace, an effect of his bounty that put it in their power, and becauſe of a diſtinguiſhed nature, and highly acceptable in his ſight. The clauſe, "The things concerning me have an *end*," Luke xxii. 37. would be better, *the things that reſpect me come to a period*; or rather, *have their accompliſhment*. A verb connected with the word rendered *end*, if not derived from it, ſignifies *to perfect, to complete, to accompliſh*, and is ſo rendered in a preceding clauſe of the verſe—"this that is written ſhall yet be *accompliſhed* in me."

A common eaſtern proverb, which occurs Acts ix. 5. is obſcured in our tranſlation, "It is hard for thee to kick againſt the *pricks*. The alluſion is to a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke, that ſpurns, kicks or ſtrikes back, when goaded up by the driver, and ſo gets himſelf worſe wounded. The phraſe might be rendered, *it is hard*, or *it is dangerous for thee to kick againſt the goads*, which were formed of iron or ſteel. Thus a proverbial expreſſion, taken from unruly beeves, denoting that thoſe who give way to impotent rage hurt themſelves, is applied to ſuch as fight againſt God, and perſecute his cauſe and people, as Saul did, whoſe efforts cannot affect him, nor materially hurt them, but muſt recoil to their own material hurt.

I ſhall advert only to one phraſe more, which is now alſo become obſolete—"Doth he thank *that ſervant? I trowe* not," Luke xvii. 9.—Doth he eſteem, or count it a favour from that ſervant? *I judge not*. After what I ſaid above, the Engliſh reader will not think I mean to diſparage his Bible, by pointing out theſe things to which many others might be added.

Some view the ſolemn paſſage which we have in the firſt of the Proverbs, towards the cloſe, as an inſuperable bar to the reſtoration, and exult, as if this paſſage at once decided the cauſe for ever in their favour. The whole tenders a ſolemn warning to ſinners, not to trifle with God and conſcience under the preſent diſpenſation, which, in relation to them, will ſoon be over; and admoniſhes them ſpeedily to improve the means of ſalvation, upon pain of incurring his (God's) higheſt diſpleaſure. But there is not one word in the whole paſſage that will bear a total and final excluſion from mercy. The univerſal doctrine inculcates, that thoſe who refuſe when God calls, and regard not when he ſtretches out his hand to deliver them, but ſet at nought all his friendly counſels, and reject his reproofs, that he will treat them as the wiſe man there deſcribes. When diſtreſs and anguiſh come upon them, he will not anſwer their calls, and they ſhall not find him when they ſeek him early, for the weighty reaſons aſſigned. Thus will they be left to eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. But muſt God take up all eternity to execute theſe threats? Can he not accompliſh all this between the period of the ſinners death, and ſome time in the age of ages, that ſuch threatenings muſt be deemed an eternal bar to the exerciſe of mercy beyond their execution? There is not a threatening in the whole Bible but God can execute, and yet leave himſelf at full liberty to ſhew mercy on his guilty and miſerable creatures after that execution; and he will do both, in their proper order, would men give him time. Are not the fooliſh virgins in the parable left at death in the very ſame ſtate Solomon deſcribes? they cry, Lord, lord, open to us; but receive no friendly anſwer, but an awful repulſe. Will the wicked preſent no cries for mercy at the laſt day? They doubtleſs will; but we know that the Lord, their judge, will be deaf to their piercing cries. The Lord will not hear ſuch as call upon him, and cry for mercy at theſe periods, becauſe then is the ſeaſon of executing judgment, when repentance ſhall be hid from his eyes, and mercy from theirs; yet I read, "and it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved," Acts ii. 21. This is a general declaration, and who has a right to confine the ſphere of its operation? If ſo ſoon as God's wrath begins to burn, ſome at leaſt will be brought to cry for mercy, will the dread and permanent proceſs of the great furnace of fire produce no effect? While Chriſt reigns as Mediator, none of his ſubjects will be finally excluded from the benefit of his promiſes, and that will be till he deliver up the kingdom to the Father, at the cloſe of the glorious age of ages. Does God permit his own elect to cry to him long before he anſwers their prayer; elſe the blood of the martyrs would have been long ago viſited upon them that dwell upon the earth? The Lord hath fixed a time for every purpoſe, and in the end it will ſpeak, and will not lie.

Cannot God effect much in a little time? and yet the objectors againſt the reſtitution will not allow him to execute his threatenings in any period ſhort of abſolute eternity. Neither thouſands nor millions of years will anſwer their purpoſe. This is judging of him by feeble ſenſe. It requires no great ſtretch of underſtanding to enable a perſon to perceive how ſuch threatenings may be

fully and literally executed, and yet mercy thereafter find abundant ſcope, with regard to their unhappy objects. I think this point abundantly illuſtrated by the exhortation which God himſelf gives to earthly parents, reſpecting their children—"Chaſten thy ſon while there is hope, and let not thy ſoul ſpare for his crying," Prov. xix. 18. Does the Lord here exhort parents to caſt off all bowels of compaſſion for their children, and all concern for their future happineſs, ſeeing he expreſsly commands them not to let their ſoul ſpare the rod for their crying? The very reverſe is the caſe; and will he himſelf not be allowed to act with as much wiſdom and love, in his paternal corrections, as earthly parents, becauſe he will not hear the cries of his guilty creatures in certain circumſtances, ſo as entirely to ſupercede the execution of his threatenings? Seeing he is a father, and indeed the very beſt of fathers, what honour do we do him, in maintaining that he does not act with as much wiſdom and affection in correcting his offspring, as daily occurs in the conduct of earthly parents towards theirs? As a proof that God does not deem or pronounce the wicked paſt hope, he will not ſpare them for their crying, when he viſits upon them their iniquities. The margin reads the text, *Let not thy ſoul ſpare to his deſtruction, or to cauſe him to die;* whence we may infer, that the correction of our heavenly Father, ſo far from conſiſting in the eternal deſtruction of any of his creatures, will be over-ruled as a mean of deliverance, as well as preſerving from it. If the chaſtiſement inflicted by earthly parents is often productive of ſuch good effects, will the moſt awful viſitation of the univerſal parent never produce any ſalutary fruit to his miſerable offspring to all eternity? In my opinion we have the cleareſt anſwer to this, and objections founded on ſimilar paſſages, in Jer. xi. 11, 14. "Thus ſaith the Lord, behold I will bring evil upon them, which they ſhall not be able to eſcape; and, tho' they *ſhall cry* unto me, *I will not hearken* unto them. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble." Does not this ſeem to leave their caſe hopeleſs? yet the very next verſe ſhews that the Lord did not mean to caſt them off for ever, and that his refuſing to hear either themſelves in the day of trouble, when they cried to him, or the prophet in their behalf, imports no more than that he would not avert the threatened judgment, in anſwer to any ſuch cries and prayers, and that the prophet ſhould deſiſt from praying for them with any ſuch view. "What hath *my beloved* to do in my houſe, ſeeing ſhe hath wrought lewdneſs with many? when thou doſt evil, then thou rejoiceſt." *His beloved*, and yet guilty of ſuch conduct! plain proof that mercy was yet reſerved for them.

But I might have contented myſelf on this objection, by referring to what I have ſaid on theſe words, "He that made them will have no mercy upon them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour," were it not that I had acceſs ſince to hear what a mighty ſtreſs has been lately laid from the pulpit upon Solomon's words. Objections multiply almoſt without end; for what will not people object when under the influence of prejudice and prepoſſeſſion? But reſerving a farther anſwer to ſome of theſe to another opportunity, let me conclude *this epiſtle* by an extract from an hymn, entitled, *Myſterious Diſpenſations of Providence.*

" Judge not the Lord by feeble ſenſe,
But ever truſt his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a ſmiling face.
His purpoſes will riper faſt,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taſte,
But ſweet ſhall be the flower.
Blind unbelief is ſure to err,
And ſcan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

Why not apply theſe remarks in their full latitude? for God's adminiſtration is not confined to this ſtate, or his firſt-born. Wiſhing his own light may to us, Dear Sir, and to all his people, ſhine on all his paths,

I remain, &c.

LETTER XVI.

The words of wiſe men are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.—How do ye ſay, We are wiſe, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, the wiſe have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wiſdom is in them? Thro' deceit they refuſe to know me, ſaith the Lord.—I will hear what the Lord will ſpeak.—Until the time of the reſtitution of all things, which God has ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, ſince the world began.—In mercy ſhall the throne be eſtabliſhed.—I will gather all nations and tongues, and they ſhall come and ſee my glory.—The new heavens and the new earth which I will make, ſhall remain before me, ſaith the Lord; and it ſhall come to paſs, that all fleſh ſhall come and worſhip before me.—We, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.—Eccl. ix. 17. Jer. viii. 8, 9. & ix. 6. Pſal. lxxxv. 8. Acts iii. 21. Iſa. xvi. 5. & lxvi. 18, 22, 23. 2 Pet. iii. 13.

Dear Sir,

MAN hath too much been, in every age, the child of folly, the dupe of prejudice, and the foe of truth. Inſtead of occupying the talents committed to his truſt, he is content to bury them in the duſt, or commit them to the care and keeping of others, as if they could render an account for him in future. Where he is much concerned to ſee with his own eyes, thro' a ſpirit of indolence, the parent of credulity and ſuperſtition, and not ſeldom the nurſe of ſcepticiſm and infidelity, he is apt to truſt implicitly to the report of others. A diſpoſition to receive truth undiſguiſed, and on her own account, is not the common attainment of mortals. The obedience of faith, however, requires, that *we ſhould believe* what God ſpeaks, ſolely upon his own authority, without

ſending him to the ſchool of human wiſdom, to give meaning to his words. He invites us to employ our reaſon and underſtanding in judging of the evidence of his ſpeaking to us, and of the purport of his language, what men will ſeldom grant; but we inſult him when we put a meaning in his mouth which his own language does not convey, or repreſent that language, and the thoughts and purpoſes of his heart as at variance, and liſten to man as his interpreter, rather than to himſelf. No wonder then the prophet's charge ſhould be too well founded, with regard to men's opinions, as well as the circumſtances that ſpring from them, "The cuſtoms of the people are vain," Jer. x. 3.

Some of the portions of ſcripture, adverted to in the preceding parts of this correſpondence, have, upon a more cloſe inſpection, preſented additional proofs of the univerſal doctrine. But this review of the ſcripture evidence upon the ſubject having extended much beyond what was at firſt propoſed, I muſt deny myſelf and the reader the pleaſure of recurring to theſe, tho' I have made free to do it in ſome inſtances It is hoped, however, ſome of theſe will occur to the attentive reader, who takes the trouble of turning to his Bible, and coolly examining the paſſages referred to, in their connection and ſcriptural import. My higheſt ambition in this attempt is, to preſent him with a key. One excellency of that decried doctrine is, it ſerves as a key to many a paſſage, otherwiſe inexplicable, ſheds a light on the whole volume of truth, and enables every reader to be, in a great meaſure, his own interpreter, without the aid of human creed, ſyſtem, or divine, that too often ſetter the mind in the ſearch of truth, and lead it aſtray from the plain meaning of ſcripture.

I am inclined to view Iſhmael and Eſau as a type of all in every age that are rejected on account of their unbelief, or fall ſhort of the inheritance of the firſt-born. His father Iſaac by faith bleſſed the latter concerning things to come, tho' with a bleſſing inferior far to that of his brother, which he deſpiſed and forfeited. I have elſewhere given my opinion of the happy fruit of that bleſſing, when ſpeaking of the cordial interview of Jacob and Eſau. Abraham prayed in behalf of the firſt-born, tho' not heir of the promiſe, "O that Iſhmael might live before thee;" and God replied, "As for Iſhmael, I have heard thy prayer." Will any take upon them to prove, that the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, had nothing in view in this prayer but temporal benefits? Did he not ſhew more concern than this for the meaneſt ſervant in his great houſehold, whom he trained up in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord? I find the place whence Moſes ſent the choſen ſpies to ſurvey the land of promiſe, called *Kadeſh-barnea*, or *The holineſs of the inconſtant, the fugitive*, or *exile ſon*, by whom commentators allow Iſhmael to be intended, Num. xxxii. 8. If Iſhmael was never to be made holy, would the ſpirit of God, in his word, record the proper names of a country, called after him, that plainly imported his holineſs? Such things are written, that none might preſume to pronounce any ſo wicked and abandoned of God, as to be never recovered to holineſs and happineſs. The caſting Iſhmael out of the family was grievous to his father Abraham, yet was it of God, and intended to prefigure the expulſion of all *mockers and formaliſts* out of the church of the firſt-born. He could not in-

herit with Iſaac the heir, and therefore was ſent to a diſtance. They cannot inherit with the heirs of promiſe, thoſe who now believe in Jeſus and obey him; and therefore they ſhall be baniſhed to the far country, where famine and miſery rage. As it was grievous to Abraham to caſt out his own child, to wander, parched with thirſt in a wilderneſs, till brought to the brink of the grave; ſo the puniſhment of the wicked will be God's ſtrange, tho' neceſſary work, in which he can never take pleaſure. As Iſhmael was relieved, and reaped the benefit of his father's prayers, ſo as to attain holineſs fitting him for happineſs, whence the place of his reſidence was denominated holineſs after him; ſo may we hope will Chriſt be heard in behalf of his outcaſt Iſhmaelites, and that the land of their future reſidence, even the new earth, ſhall be called Holineſs to the Lord, a *Kadeſh-barnea, the holineſs of the inconſtant* or *exile fugitive ſons*. Peter tells us expreſsly, that in that earth righteouſneſs dwelleth. Tho' neither Hagar nor Iſhmael were apparent heirs of the promiſe, yet God took care of them in their outcaſt forlorn ſtate, provided a well of water to refreſh them, and ſent his angel to point it out, and to aſſure them of his protection and bleſſing, all of which I view as a figure and pledge of what the Lord will do hereafter for all the wretched outcaſts of his great family, Gen. xxi. Their relation to Abraham is the reaſon aſſigned why the Lord promiſed and ſhewed ſo much kindneſs to theſe two outcaſts from his family; and will not the relation Chriſt bears to all men as their Creator, their Saviour, their Lord and brother, ſecure ſimilar bleſſings, in their favour? You ſee that none of theſe remarks are forced, they flow natively from the ſubject; in which we may ſee, as in a glaſs, what ſhall come to paſs hereafter; for we are taught to conſider theſe things as a ſhadow, or allegorical repreſentation of things to come.

The prophet tells us, that when God's judgments are, or ſhall be in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs, Iſa. xxvi. 9. This hath never yet been the caſe; but will any venture to ſay that this ſhall never come to paſs? The Lord hath a great and ſore judgment yet to inflict, that will doubtleſs be made ſubſervient to ſuch an iſſue of things, elſe that expreſs prediction can never be fully accompliſhed. Unerring authority aſſures us, that there is as real a connection between the miſſion of the word of truth, and its deſired ſucceſs, as between the fruitfulneſs of the earth, as an effect, and the rain, dew, and ſnow of heaven, deſcending upon it, as the cauſe: "For as the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower and bread to the eater: ſo ſhall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it," Iſa. lv. 10, 11. This hath never yet been the caſe, in the ſenſe this beautiful paſſage inſtructs, and upon the common ſyſtem never can; but the doctrine of the final reſtoration ſhews how it ſhall be accompliſhed. Let none object, that the word accompliſhes what God pleaſes, and proſpers in the thing for which he ſends it, with regard to the wicked, on the preſent ſyſtem, as well as the righteous; for God hath no pleaſure in the death of thoſe that periſh, and he ſends his word to heal men, and to free

them from their deſtructions, Pſal. cvii. 20. which, if not accompliſhed by its firſt diſpenſation, that reſpects the firſt fruits, will, by its laſt diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, which is intended for the recovery of the full harveſt. The ſalvation, and not the condemnation of the ſinner, is the primary and leading object or end of God's ſending the goſpel to him, the latter being only the incidental conſequence of his own indulged unbelief and perverſeneſs. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil," John iii. 19.

Jeremiah calls Jehovah *King of nations*, "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations!" chap. x. 7. Elſewhere he is called *King of kings, and Lord of lords*; and theſe are not mere nominal titles; for, taken together, they muſt include all mankind, who will in due time be his willing ſubjects. And another prophet ſpeaking of him, ſays, "The God of the *whole earth* ſhall he be called, Iſa. liv. 5. The whole earth muſt denote all its inhabitants, and not merely or chiefly the ſoil on which they live. He is equally the God of the whole earth in every age, tho' not ſo acknowledged; but the time will come when his univerſal relation to the human race, as their God, will be believed and profeſſed in the church, inſtead of being counted, as at preſent, a damnable hereſy.

The apoſtle James tells us, that men in general are made after the image of God, which muſt be true in one ſenſe or other. From our Lord's reply to the Jews, upon preſenting a piece of the public currency, owning that it bare Caeſar's image and inſcription, "Render to Caeſar the things that are Caeſar's, and to God the things that are God's," we may ſee the force and native inference of the apoſtle's expreſſion. Connecting the above, with what I have ſaid elſewhere, upon our Lord's anſwer to the Sadducees, in proof of a future ſtate, I think it is abundantly plain that the Meſſiah claims an intereſt in the whole human race, that their being made after the image of God is expreſſive of his property in them, and a pledge and earneſt of his reſtoring them in future to his moral image and enjoyment. Why then ſhould any make free to render to the great Caeſar, the God of this world, the things that belong to Jehovah, and that by an irrevocable grant.

But wicked men are the children of the devil, ſay ſome, and it is but right that every being ſhould have his own. It is granted that thoſe who do the devil's work, are, in a certain ſenſe, his children; but this cannot prevent their recovery to God, elſe who then could be ſaved? The apoſtle teaches, that there is in every perſon an old man, quite diſtinct from what God has given being to, or a corrupt principle, that produces fruit like itſelf; and ſeeing this is the offſpring of Satan, who ſows the tares, it denominates thoſe in whom it prevails his children. The word of God, and the experience of his people in all ages, ſhew that this old man, with his deeds, may be deſtroyed, whence ſuch ceaſe to be the children of the wicked one, and yet God's workmanſhip preſerved. Too much of the old man with his deeds exiſts in the very beſt of men, yet the oppoſite principle of divine grace having the aſcendency, denominates them the ſons of God. The apoſtle prays, that thoſe to whom he wrote might be ſanctified *wholly*, in ſoul, body, and ſpirit. This will be the priviledge of all the firſt-born,

whoſe bodies ſhall be ſo ſanctified or ſet apart for God, that they ſhall ſhine like the ſun in the kingdom of their Father, as the body of our Lord did in his transfiguration. In this ſanctification, the ſubjects of the ſecond death, tho' reſtored, will not participate, their ſtate being a reſtitution or reſtoration to the ſtate of primeval bliſs, as poſſeſſed by Adam in Paradiſe.

The ſeparation of the old man from God's workmanſhip, is often aſcribed in ſcripture to the operation of fire, to which the agency of God's word and ſpirit, in purifying the ſouls of men, is often compared. God himſelf is repreſented as a conſuming fire, and that even to the church of the firſt-born; "The Lord thy God is a conſuming fire—our God is a conſuming fire," Deut. iv. 24, Heb. xii. 29. He is not ſo merely by the operation of his fiery judgments, but alſo by the influence of his paternal love and goodneſs, with which all his works ſhall one day appear to be fraught. The imperfect expreſſions of our own limited beneficence are ſpoken of as operating like fire in ſubduing the enmity of others; "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirſty, give him water to drink; for thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord ſhall reward thee," Prov. xxv. 21, 22. Conſulting this paſſage in its connection, as quoted by Paul, the exhortation will appear ſtill more forcible, Rom. xii. 20, 21. There Chriſtians are enjoined not to be overcome with evil, but to overcome evil with good. If our little kind offices, the good with which we are to overcome evil, are capable, like coals of fire, of melting the heart of an enemy, and producing in it a friendly diſpoſition, do we honour God, by not allowing his goodneſs and love to produce any ſuch effect upon any of his enemies, beyond the boundary of this mortal life to all eternity? Is it poſſible that God's love can be totally excluded where his breath fans the fire of the great furnace, and directs its operation?

So terrible, however, are his judgments, we are told that "at his wrath the earth ſhall tremble, and the nations ſhall not be able to abide his indignation; for the ſpirit would fail before him, and the ſouls which he has made," Jer. x. 10. Iſa. lvii. 16. This led the weeping prophet to pray, "O Lord correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, leſt thou bring me to nothing;" which ſhews in what ſenſe the ſpirit and ſouls would fail before him. "I will not keep anger for ever, ſaith the Lord;" and he aſſigns this reaſon for it, "for I am merciful," which he will always continue to be, Jer. iii. 12. Downwards at the 17th verſe, we are told that "all the nations ſhall be gathered to the name of the Lord, to Jeruſalem; neither ſhall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." We are told, ver. 19. how ſinners are brought thus far, "I ſaid, thou ſhalt call me, my Father, and ſhalt not turn away from me;" and he who hath ſo ſaid, can bring it to paſs.

Short as the 117th Pſalm is, it contains no mean proof of the univerſal doctrine—"O praiſe the Lord, all ye nations; praiſe him, all ye people;" or, as in the original, *all peoples*, both including doubtleſs the whole human race. Will the Lord never give them ground of praiſe to that extent? When Paul and Barnabas declared, as they paſſed thro' different places, the converſion of the Gentiles, we are told that "they cauſed great joy unto all the brethren," Acts xv. 3.

and why ſhould Chriſtian brethren be now diſtreſſed at hearing, from the word of God, of the converſion of the outcaſt Gentiles, or nations of all ages? James tells us, that what God has done hitherto, is only viſiting them, to take out of them a people for his name; but he ſpeaks of his return after this, to build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and to build again the ruins thereof, and to ſet it up. This will be accompliſhed when the Jews are reſtored to the church of God. That glorious event is to pave the way for another no leſs glorious, or rather far more ſo; "that the reſidue of men might ſeek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, (or even all the Gentiles) upon whom his name is (or ſhall be) called, ſaith the Lord, who doth all theſe things." Well might he add, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The term rendered *reſidue*, καταλοιποι, denotes *the remaining, the reſt*, thoſe that are *left behind*, that have been *forſaken*, that are *reſerved*, according to Parkhurſt, in explaining the verb from which, in the paſſive, it is derived. The prepoſition κατα, *down, againſt*, adds an ill ſenſe to the ſimple word, and denotes, in connection with λοιποι, the reſt of men, ſuch as are in a wretched depreſſed ſituation. I view them as denoting the reſt of mankind, after a people have been taken out of them for the name of the Lord, as James expreſſes it. The whole paſſage juſtifies, in my opinion, this ſenſe. If they are left to ſuffer miſery for a long period, it is for the reaſon aſſigned by the Lord himſelf, "Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee; know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts," Jer. ii. 19.

I view the phraſe of the apoſtle James, *at the firſt*, "how God at the firſt did viſit the gentiles," &c. Acts xv. 14. as referring not merely to the converſion of Cornelius and his friends, who were the firſt fruits to God and the Lamb from among the nations, but as extending to the whole preſent diſpenſation of the goſpel, and to all the people that are taken out of them for the name of the Lord, ſo long as that diſpenſation ſhall continue, which will be to the day of judgment. To viſit thus *at the firſt*, or *firſt*, πρωτον, the adverb ſignifying *firſt* in point of time, as contraſted with ſomething to follow; and alſo firſt in order or dignity, ſeems to me plainly to imply a ſubſequent viſitation; and is not this expreſſed in the cleareſt manner by the apoſtle, making the Lord promiſe, "After this I will *return*—that *the reſidue of man* might ſeek after the Lord"—that all thoſe who had not been gathered to him under the diſpenſation of the firſt-fruits, might be brought, by that other viſitation upon the Lord's return, to the knowledge and belief of the truth, and ſo to an actual intereſt in the common ſalvation, ſo far as it conſiſts in deliverance from guilt and miſery and recovery to holineſs and happineſs. Seeing Jeſus is the ſaviour of all men, tho' eſpecially of thoſe who now believe—has given his life a ranſom for all—has taſted death for every man—taken away the ſin of the world—is the propitiation, not for the ſins of the church *only*, but alſo for the ſins of the *whole world*—is the heir of the world, and head of all things to his church—the Lord *of the dead and* the living—and will have all men to be ſaved, and to come to

the knowledge of the truth; is there not abundant ground to believe that this will finally take place, under his adminiſtration? Does not his ſaying, "In my Father's houſe there are many manſions," ſeem to countenance this view of the ſubject? Will no manſions be prepared for the younger branches of his family?

I forget myſelf on this delightful theme, ſo copious are the materials. Yet can I not forbear recommending to your attentive peruſal the 65th and 66th chapters of Iſaiah, which are evidently connected with the reſtitution of all things, and deſcribe ſome of its leading features. What occurs in the 8th verſe of the laſt, is truly remarkable in this connection. Zion intends the church of the firſt-born. Before the new heavens and the new earth are created, their number ſhall be completed; and yet we here find her in travail, and bringing forth a man child, even before her pain came. That we might not interpret this birth in a contracted, or common light, it is extended to the whole earth, ſpoken of as the work of a day, and as including the birth of a nation at once. This is introduced with a queſtion, expreſſive of wonder at the glorious event; "Who hath heard ſuch a thing? who hath ſeen ſuch things? for as ſoon as Zion travailed ſhe brought forth her children." Yet the renovating work is not to ſtop here —"ſhall I cauſe to bring forth, and ſhut the womb? ſaith the Lord." Paul ſpeaks of himſelf as travailing in birth, till Chriſt ſhould be formed in the hearts of men the hope of glory; which explains the prophet's figurative language. The mother that bears and brings forth makes the beſt nurſe; accordingly, the children thus born, are repreſented as ſucking, and being ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations; as milking out, and being delighted with the abundance or brightneſs of her glory. The glory of the gentiles, or of the nations, is ſaid to be extended to Jeruſalem like a flowing ſtream; whence theſe are addreſſed, "Then ſhall ye ſuck, ye ſhall be borne upon her ſides, and dandled upon her knees." How expreſſive what follows! "as one whom his mother comforteth, ſo will I comfort you;" that is, thoſe who are born and nurſed as above; "and ye ſhall be comforted in or by Jeruſalem." Thus the remarkable prophecy, chap. 25th, ſhall be fulfilled. "And *in* or by this mountain ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will deſtroy or *ſwallow up*, in or *by* this mountain, the face of the covering, or *the face-covering*, caſt over all people, and the vail that is ſpread over all nations. He will ſwallow up death in victory, or *for evermore*; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off *all* faces; and the rebuke of his people ſhall he take away from off *all* the earth: for the Lord hath ſpoken it. And it ſhall be ſaid in that day, (ſaid by the nations ſo delivered and bleſſed) Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will ſave us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his ſalvation." Conſult the parallels, Rev. vii. 17. and xxi. 4. and you will there ſee to what period the prediction refers, even the times of the reſtitution of all things, when he that ſits upon the throne ſhall, according to his ſolemn promiſe, *make all things new*. We ſee above the agency of the ſaints of the Moſt High as kings and prieſts, in recovering their brethren. A pious commentator views the two last

chapters of the Revelation as a deſcription of the millennium, but eſpecially of the heavenly ſtate; but if ſo, where ſhall we find, upon the common ſyſtem, nations to be healed after the heavenly ſtate commences; and pain, ſorrow, crying, and death, to be done away, and all things to be made new? The viſion itſelf clearly fixes the period of its accompliſhment, that it is to be after the laſt judgment. The univerſal doctrine gives a clear, conſiſtent, and glorious ſenſe to the above paſſages; but the received ſyſtem obſcures and mangles them, to make them agree with the gloſs affixed to other texts of ſcripture, and the favourite doctrine of the eternal damnation of all the non-elect, or reprobates, as they are termed. If the world that is ſaid to lie in wickedneſs, or in the wicked one, were all reprobate, why ſhould God be repreſented as in Chriſt reconciling this world to himſelf, or deſtroying its enmity and reſtoring it to a ſtate of favour and friendſhip, as reconciling imports? "God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation," 2 Cor. v. 19. Will the world, notwithſtanding, always remain at variance with its Maker? My Father, ſaid our Lord, worketh hitherto, and I work; yet their united and continued work, if we believe the common doctrine, will never be able to accompliſh the deſirable work of reconciling the world. Is there any thing too hard for God to accompliſh?

But it is time I ſhould return to the objections of antagoniſts, which, like the fabulous hydra, or the many-headed monſtrous ſerpent of old, no ſooner do you ſtrike off one, than another ſprings up in its place. It is objected, Doth not death tranſmit the ſouls of men, and the day of judgment their complete perſons, into eternity, where no ſuch change, as the reſtoration ſuppoſes, can be expected? It is granted, that once fixed in eternity, no ſuch change can be expected; but it is denied that either death or judgment fixes them in that ſtate. God alone inhabits eternity hitherto, and ſolely will, till Meſſiah delivers up his kingdom into his hand. Time has a relation to creatures, and their actions and concerns. The whole of it is commenſurate with Chriſt's mediatory reign; and bounded by the abſolute or unbounded reign of Jehovah. If death introduces the departed ſoul of every individual into eternity, and if eternity can admit of no change, how comes it that both the righteous and the wicked have very material changes before them after that event? This cuts the ſinews of the objection; for either there will be changes in eternity, or the period that ſucceeds death to individuals is not eternity. Muſt not infants and idiots undergo a change after death, elſe they muſt remain ſuch for ever? That eternity will not commence, with regard to creatures, at the day of judgment, is alſo evident from ſcripture. All that are in the leaſt acquainted with Greek, can ſatisfy themſelves, that theſe words of the angel, Rev. x. 6. "and ſware that there ſhould be *time* no longer," ſhould be rendered, *that there ſhall not be further delay or opportunity.* Time, ſo far from terminating then, will extend throughout what we have rendered *for ever and ever*, or the ages of ages, during which the ſmoke of the torment of the wicked is to aſcend. This appears plainly from *Rev. xiv. 11. and* xx. 10. where we read of the ſucceſſion of day and night as

of equal duration with for ever and ever. Eternity is one, and admits of no ſuch diviſion of duration. Job teaches us, that a period will come when there will be no ſuch interchange of light and darkneſs; "until the day and night come to an end," Job. xxvi. 10. Thus we ſee time ſhall not terminate until the cloſe of the age of ages, before which Chriſt ſhall have made all things new.

Some will object, Are not the wicked termed *reprobates*, which denotes that they were paſſed over in the decree of election, and reprobated or rejected as caſt-aways, without the leaſt hope of recovery? Tho' this notion is commonly inculcated, yet the uſe of the term in ſcripture imports no ſuch thing. I ſhall content myſelf with giving you Parkhurſt's explanation of the meaning of the original word, and his reference to all the paſſages in the New Teſtament where it occurs, whence you may form an opinion of its real import.

"Αδοκιμος. The word is uſed both in a paſſive and an active ſenſe. In the former it is properly applied to *metals*, and refers to that part of them which, upon refining, is *thrown away as droſſy and worthleſs*: ſo in the LXX. it anſwers to the Hebrew word rendered *droſs*, Iſa. i. 22. Prov. xxv. 3.—In a paſſive ſenſe, *diſapproved*, *rejected*, *caſt away*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. Heb. vi. 8. compared with 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6, 7.—In an active ſenſe, *undiſcerning*, *undiſtinguiſhing*, *void of judgment*, Rom. i. 28. 2 Tim. iii. 8. Tit. i. 26." The meaning of the compound term may be farther learned from that of the ſimple, which ſignifies *proved*, *tried*, as metals by *fire*. In this ſenſe it is uſed by the LXX. for the Hebrew word rendered *refined*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 18. xxix. 4.; *pure*, *purified*, 2 Chron. ix. 17.; *ſolid*, 1 Kings x. 18. Alſo, *proved*, *approved*, as acceptable men in the *furnace* of affliction, James i. 12. Rom. xvi. 10. *Approved*, *accepted*, Rom. iv. 18. 2 Cor. x. 18. xiii. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 15. 1 Cor. xi. 19. In all theſe ſenſes of the word, in its ſimple and compounded ſtate, and in all the paſſages where it occurs, there is nothing to juſtify the meaning commonly given to reprobation, as the mere reſult of an unconditional act of Jehovah's will. It appears wholly to relate to the creature, and the native fruit of his ſtate and character before God, who will judge and treat him accordingly. Reprobate ſilver, is ſilver that falls ſhort in weight of the current ſtandard, or is mixed with baſe metal.

Some lay much ſtreſs upon God's hardening men's hearts, which he is ſometimes ſaid to do, as if he did this by a mere act of ſovereignty. God never forſakes any till they firſt forſake him, and obſtinately refuſe to be reclaimed. No more is neceſſary to harden a ſinners heart, than to give him up to its native obduracy and impenitence; and tho' he may bear with ſome longer than with others, yet he never leaves them in that ſtate till they have previouſly contemned his friendly counſels, and abuſed his paternal goodneſs and reproofs.

The ſaying in Mark has been thought to exclude all hope of reſtoration; "For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt," chap. ix, 49. I am however led to view it in a quite different light. This expreſſive figure appears to me to import, not only the certainty and terrible nature of future puniſhment, but alſo its benign deſign, and happy tendency. The uſe of ſalt was enjoined upon the Jews in all their offerings made by fire;

"And every oblation of thy meat-offering ſhalt thou ſeaſon with ſalt; neither ſhalt thou ſuffer the ſalt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou ſhalt offer ſalt," Lev. ii. 13. "The prieſts ſhall caſt ſalt upon them, and they ſhall offer them up for a burnt-offering unto the Lord," Ezek, xliii. 24. Theſe two paſſages direct us how to underſtand our Lord's words. Moral depravity is often compared to that corruption which ſoon affects all animal matter if not ſeaſoned. The mode of curing moral evil, or of removing it from the patient, is not unaptly repreſented by the effect of ſalt, which produces a ſmarting pain when applied to the ſores of a ſentient body; and for a ſinner to be ſalted, or ſeaſoned with fire, as a ſacrifice, muſt import that he ſhall not to be annihilated, but ſubjected to a miſery very awful and excruciating. The excrements, &c. of ſuch ſacrifices, were conſumed by fire without the camp, a plain repreſentation of the total deſtruction of every thing about the ſinner, that may be juſtly called, in the language of Paul, *loſt* and *dung*. Over thoſe in whom this is conſumed in the preſent ſtate, by the means which God has appointed, the ſecond death ſhall have no power; for they ſhall not come into condemnation. Hence the firſt fruits, that were typical of the church of the firſt-born, which is characterized by that very name, were not to be offered to the Lord by fire. "As for the oblation of the firſt-fruits, ye ſhall offer them unto the Lord; but they ſhall not be burnt on the altar for a ſweet ſavour," Lev. ii. 12.

Our Lord's declaration, that every impenitent ſinner, who will not part now with a right-eye, or right-hand ſin, ſhall hereafter be ſeaſoned with fire, where the worm dies not, while it has any nutriment to feed on, and the fire is not quenched, till it has accompliſhed the purpoſe of kindling it, ſays plainly to me that ſuch ſacrifices ſhall find acceptance in God's ſight, that they ſhall be at length ſaved or recovered, yet ſo as by fire. Did the prieſt of old, who ſerved at the altar, eat of the ſacrifices along with thoſe who brought them; and ſhall Jeſus, the great high prieſt of our profeſſion, never ſee of the travail of his ſoul in theſe ſacrifices, which he himſelf will offer, and ſeaſon with the ſalt of fire, and be ſatisfied? Will they never, in any ſenſe, have the honour to eat with him?

Why did our Lord compare future puniſhment to a ſalting with fire? The leaſt attention to the nature of the figure may ſuffice to explain this. Salt is employed for ſeaſoning, and to give a reliſh to things that would otherwiſe be diſagreeable to the palate; and alſo to preſerve corruptible bodies from putrefaction, or recover them, if already infected; whence divine grace is compared to ſalt. Our Lord exhorts his diſciples, "Have ſalt in yourſelves, and have peace one with another;" and addreſſes them, in their public character, "Ye are the ſalt of the earth," Mark ix. 50. Mat. v. 13. Let your ſpeech be with grace ſeaſoned with ſalt," &c. Col. iv. 6. It is called, in one of the texts quoted above, *the ſalt of the covenant of thy God*; and will the fire with which the wicked ſhall be ſeaſoned, tho' compared to ſalt, have no reſpect whatever to his covenant? Will the fruit of this ſeaſoning never tend to the purging away of ſin? Mercy, truth, and grace are connected with God's covenant. "By

mercy and truth (ſays Solomon) iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil," Prov. xvi. 6. Where that God is who is never out of Chriſt, and blows up the fire with his breath, mercy and truth cannot be always abſent. If earthly parents can procure obedience and reſpect, by the wiſe and moderate uſe of the rod, why ſhould we deny the great Father of ſpirits the honour of producing ſuch fear or reverence, by his correction, as will lead men to depart from evil? Has he leſs prudence than earthly parents, to make his rod and his word to give wiſdom to his offspring; or leſs love to manage theſe for their good? I read, "A king that ſitteth in the throne of judgment ſcattereth away all evil with his eyes," Prov. xx. 8. If this applies to any earthly kings, much more to the King of kings, to whom, I conceive, it principally refers. His mercy and truth are eyes thro' which he beholdeth all things. His Holy Spirit, too, the ſame as his breath, with which he blows up the flames of hell, is ſaid to have ſeven eyes. And yet tho' the wicked are ſaid to be tormented in his preſence, while ſeated on his throne in the New Jeruſalem, making all things new, he will never ſcatter away, if we believe the common doctrine, *all* evil with his eyes. Of all the kings of the earth, the bulk of men, even of profeſſors, do leaſt honour to the King of kings; for they will not allow him to poſſeſs what they daily aſcribe to earthly kings and parents.

But to return to our Lord's figure of ſeaſoning or ſalting the wicked with fire, terrible as muſt be the operation of their puniſhment, which is thus deſcribed, to them it ſhall be a pledge of that grace of which ſalt was the fixed emblem, and a prelude and preparative to their enjoyment of it. Does it not alſo intimate their intereſt in the great atoning ſacrifice? for Jeſus gave his life a ranſom, or price of redemption for all, and is the propitiation for the ſins of the whole world. Who does not ſee, in all this, ground of hope, that future puniſhment, however terrible and deſtructive as fire, will be over-ruled as a mean of ſeaſoning its ſubjects, and of recovering them from that corruption of diſpoſition and manners, which renders them ſo vile and unſavory in the preſent ſtate? This plainly ſhews the abſurdity of the prevailing notion, that the wicked will become more and more depraved and prophane under all the ſeaſoning of fire with which theſe ſacrifices ſhall be ſalted. Such are the vain dreams of men, who are not careful to found their religious opinions on the word of truth.

I ſhall conclude this letter with a few remarks on one of Solomon's proverbs, which is thought to exclude all hope of reſtoration. "The Lord hath made all things for himſelf; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," Prov. xvi. 4. This paſſage has often been adduced in proof of abſolute reprobation, or that God has as certainly ordained the wicked, by an abſolute or unconditional and eternal decree, to endleſs deſtruction, and calls them into being for the manifeſtation of his glory in that deſtruction, as he has ordained the righteous to eternal life, and forms them for that life by his grace. This, if I underſtand it, is what the ſchoolmen call the *ſupralapſarian ſcheme*. Some who diſlike this view of the matter, make God act abſolutely only in the *preterition* of the wicked, as they call it, or the paſſing of them by in the decree of election, but that the

fore-ordaining of them to eternal miſery is only in conſequence of God's fore-knowledge of their ſins and unbelief. This is called the *ſublapſarian* ſcheme. They both amount to the ſame thing; for while thoſe who hold the latter view, as well as their ſupralapſarian brethren, maintain, that God has unalterably determined to give ſaving grace to none but his elect, all the reſt muſt inevitably periſh, and this is plainly included in their being paſſed over in the decree of election, which, upon their ſyſtem, makes their ſalvation impoſſible. Is it probable, or even poſſible, for the wiſeſt and beſt of Fathers ſo to plan the economy of his family, as to put it entirely out of the power of the greater part of his children ever to be happy? They who believe and preach this of God, libel his character, and teach men to abhor him, if I ſee the matter aright.

But the above text furniſhes no foundation for any ſuch doctrine, which makes the laſt clauſe contradict the firſt. The wicked are doubtleſs included in the all things that God has made for himſelf, and the laſt clauſe only ſhews how he will effect this.

The prepoſition rendered *for*, may, and is often tranſlated, *in*, *by*, *after*, whence the verſe will read, "The Lord hath made *all* things for himſelf; yea, even the wicked *in*, *by*, or *after* the day of evil." To expreſs this in the paſt time, tho' it reſpects what is future, is very frequent in ſcripture, when the purpoſe of God is concerned. Let me refer you to a few ſcripture authorities, extracted from a noted Hebrew Concordance of the Bible.—Amos iv. 4. *after* three years; Gen. vii. 10. *after* ſeven days; 2 Sam. xiii. 23. *after* two full years; Jer. xli. 4. the ſecond day *after* he had ſlain Gedaliah; Num. i. 1. ſecond year *after* they were come; 1 Kings iii. 18 the third day *after* I was delivered; Iſa. xi. 3. ſhall not judge *after* the ſight of his eyes, nor reprove *after* the hearing of his ear.——Gen. viii. 11. *in* the evening; Num. xi. 10. *in* the door; Lev. v. 5. *in* one of theſe things; Exod. iv. 30. *in* the ſight of the people; Jer. xii. 3. *in* their ſight; Iſa. xxv. 8. he will ſwallow up death *in* or *by* victory; 1 Sam. xvii. 46. a God *in* Iſrael; Pſal. xvi. 20. *in* hell.——Num. iv. 29. *by* the houſe of their fathers; Neh. iii. 15. *by* the king's garden; 1 Kings vi. 22. altar that was *by* the oracle; 1 Sam. xxix. 2. *by* hundreds and by thouſands; x. 19. *by* your tribes and *by* your thouſands. Here we have an additional proof of the reſtoration, and alſo the uſe God will make of the day of evil, or the period of puniſhment, in forming the wicked for himſelf, his expreſs purpoſe in the creation of all things. If the duration of future miſery was to have no end, I cannot conceive why the Holy Spirit ſhould call it *the day of evil*; for a day is a portion of time that has an end as well as a beginning, and therefore very unfit to repreſent endleſs duration. Elſewhere the period of vengeance is called a day, that of ſhewing mercy a year; and a ſimilar contraſt occurs in the ſecond commandment, where the period of viſiting the iniquity of the fathers who hate him, upon the children, or, as it might be rendered, *for* the children, that is, for their good, to preſerve or reclaim them from the paths in which their parents trode, is reſtricted to the third or fourth generation; whereas he ſhews *mercy to thouſands of* generations of them that love him. This is verified in

Abraham, in whom, and in his ſeed Meſſiah, and for their ſake, God has promiſed, even with an oath, to bleſs all the nations, kindreds, and families of the earth.

But let none conclude from the above, that the ſufferings of a future ſtate will be tolerable, either in degree or continuance; for they ſhall not be leſs dreadful in duration than in their nature; the term day not reſtricting them in this reſpect, but only importing that, like that portion of time, the period of ſuffering and miſery ſhall have an end. The original word which our Lord employs, Math. xxv. 46. κολασις, puniſhment, denotes the terrible nature of future miſery, yet withal its benign deſign and tendency. Parkhurſt derives it from a Hebrew verb, *kola*, which means *to check, to reſtrain, to correct*, in alluſion to the checking of the luxuriant growth of vines, and other trees, by pruning, which operation is performed by a ſteel inſtrument. Grotius and other eminent writers agree in this ſenſe of the word, as ſanctioned by Greek authors, whence it might be rendered, *correction, chaſtiſement*. But the idea of endleſs puniſhment, and that of correction are irreconcileable, and ſubverſive of each other; for a never ending correction is a contradiction in terms, whence the word *eternal*, as uſed above by our Lord, muſt ſignify a ſevere chaſtiſement for a long unknown period. The ſufferings of that period bearing no analogy to thoſe of the preſent ſtate, in their intenſeneſs and duration, and indeed in nothing, except in their ſalutary end or deſign, which proceeds from God's paternal love, the original language of the New Teſtament employs two different words to expreſs them. The term uſed to denote our ſufferings in the preſent life, παιδια, ſignifies ſuch diſcipline or correction as is adapted to the age of a child, and may be inflicted with a rod. "Whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth," or corrects him with the rod. The ſame word alſo denotes inſtruction, and the verb derived from it, to *chaſtiſe*, to *teach*, to *inſtruct*, according to that ſaying, *The rod and the word give wiſdom*. If this be the end our heavenly Father has in correcting on earth, he muſt change, elſe the ſame muſt be the deſign alſo of future puniſhment. Solomon tells us, that the *preparations*, or, as the margin reads it, *diſpoſings of the heart in man*, by which it believeth unto righteouſneſs, *and the anſwer of the tongue*, by which confeſſion is made unto ſalvation, *is from the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 1. A ſpecimen of the wonderful and various ways by which the Lord effecteth this, may be ſeen in Manaſſeh, Nebuchadnezzar, Saul of Tarſus, and Mary Magdalane. But I muſt break off. Wiſhing you God's ſpeed in every laudable effort to promote his cauſe and kingdom, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Cordially yours, &c.

LETTER XVII.

Then ſaid they, Come and let us deviſe devices againſt Jeremiah; for the law ſhall not periſh from the prieſt, nor counſel from the wiſe, nor the word from the prophet: come and let us ſmite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words. Give heed to me, O Lord, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me. Shall evil be recompenſed for good? for they have digged a pit for my ſoul. Remember that I ſtood before thee to ſpeak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.—The bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I will give my fleſh for the life of the world. He that eateth of this bread ſhall live for ever. Many therefore of his diſciples, when they heard this, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying, who can bear it? When Jeſus knew in himſelf that his diſciples murmured at it, he ſaid unto them Doth this offend you?—Jer. xix. John vi.

DEAR SIR,

OUR Lord teſtifies of himſelf, "I am the light of the world." Is he appointed by his Father to be the official light and Saviour of the world? and hath he given his fleſh for the life of the world, that by a ſacrifice for ſin he might deſtroy it in the fleſh? and is he the bread of God that giveth life unto the world? and ſhall the world notwithſtanding remain always dark, dead, famiſhed, and in a ſtate of deſtruction? To ſay it will, and that none ſhall partake of theſe bleſſings to all eternity but the elect, is as reaſonable as to aſſert, that the ſun enlightens only a ſmall part of the earth, that bread nouriſhes the life only of a few men, and that Chriſt will quicken only a very few of thoſe for whom he gave his life a ranſom, and died that they might live.

Jehovah ſays of the ſeed of Abraham, "Iſrael was holineſs to the Lord, and the firſt-fruits of his *increaſe*," Jer. ii. 3. By increaſe here we are to underſtand the Gentiles, or the reſt of mankind, who were in due time to accede to the church of God. We are accordingly told, that of the increaſe of Meſſiah's kingdom there ſhall be no end, that freſh acceſſions ſhall be made to it till all the purpoſes of its appointment be fully anſwered. A late verſion of the Bible renders the above clauſe, "Iſrael was ſeparated from the idolatrous nations, as holy to the Eternal, as the firſt-fruits of mankind," which doubtleſs expreſſes the ſenſe of the original. The Jews were all along a typical people, and in God's dealings with them, we may behold, as in a glaſs, an outline of his dealings with the whole human race. In their bondage in Egypt, and deliverance from it, we ſee in figure the inthralled ſtate of the firſt-born, prior to their converſion, and God's gracious interpoſition in their behalf, in turning them from darkneſs to light, and from the power and kingdom of Satan, to that of the Son of his love. In their after captivity in Babylon, and return to their own land, we have a ſtriking picture of the ſtate of degenerate churches, under the Lord's chaſtiſement, and of the healing of their backſlidings. But in the preſent long diſperſion of the *ſeed of Iſrael*, I conceive, we have a figure of the forlorn ſtate of the unbelieving

part of mankind beyond the grave, both in point of miſery and duration. If ſo, then the future acceſſion of the Jews to the church of God, will be a pledge and earneſt of the reſtoration of the loſt part of mankind, when the times of the reſtitution of all things ſhall come. Tho' all are not the true Iſrael, or of the church of the firſt-born, that are of Iſrael; yet we find gracious promiſes that include all Iſrael, even in the literal ſenſe. In their calamity God addreſſes them, "O my threſhing, and the corn of my floor," Iſa. xxi. 10. which plainly ſays, that their captivity, tho' long and grievous, was intended merely to ſeperate them, as wheat, from what might be compared to ſtraw, chaff, and the refuſe of corn. But if the above addreſs is viewed as made to the Chaldeans, which commentators admit, then the reaſon holds more forcibly. The overthrow of Babylon was a figure and earneſt of the total and terrible deſtruction of the anti-chriſtian ſyſtem; yet even that dreadful viſitation of Providence ſhall treat the wicked ſubjects of it, as the corn of God's floor, which he threſhes and fans, as the great Huſbandman, for the moſt beneficent purpoſes. Hell is God's largeſt and moſt terrible threſhing floor; and hence the term tribulation, by which we render the word employed by the elder to denote the ſufferings there inflicted, is taken from a term *tribulus*, that denotes a threſhing inſtrument. Every human being, ſo far as he is the workmanſhip of God, who is the father of our ſpirits, and the framer of our bodies, is wheat; and the Lord well knows how to ſever the chaff, &c. from his own wheat. To effect this ſeperation is the leading object of Chriſt's appointment, as the Judge of quick and dead; and the glory of his Father is deeply concerned in the ſublime and extenſive work. It will alſo bring to himſelf an eternal revenue of glory.

In the 14th, 15th, and 23d chapters of Jeremiah's prophecies, as alſo in many other parts of his writings, we have an affecting picture of the guilt of ancient Iſrael, as alſo of the Lord's ſevere judgments, which that guilt procured. But tho' the Lord forbade the prophet to pray for them, and threatened to give them up to deſtruction without mercy, yet his own Spirit powerfully interceded in Jeremiah in their behalf, and did not plead in vain. "Then ſaid the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good," Jer. xiv. 11. But we hear him downwards praying, "We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedneſs, and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have ſinned againſt thee. Do not abhor us, for thy name's ſake; do not diſgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us," ver. 20, 21. We ſee whereon he founded his hope, in praying for mercy in behalf of a guilty rebellious people, even upon the covenant made with the Patriarchs, which included not only their ſeed, but alſo all mankind, of whom the Jews were the firſt-fruits.

The Jews are called in an eſpecial manner Meſſiah's people, his own to whom he came; "He ſhall ſave *his* people from their ſins." On the croſs he prayed for all that had an active hand in his death, "Father forgive them;" yea, in them, for all in every age that ſhould be incenſed againſt him, and aſſent, in effect, to that infernal deed. He had long before received the Jews as the firſt-fruits of the nations, and on the day of Pentecoſt ſome thouſands of them bele-

ved on him, as the firſt fruits of the anſwer of that prayer, and as a pledge and earneſt of the whole at length. Therefore, tho' alas! too many, both of Jews and Gentiles, now reject him, and live and die ignorant of him, muſt we, on that account, conclude, that he will never recover them, either among the firſt-fruits, or the full harveſt.

When the Lord Jeſus ſhall have finiſhed the grand work given him to do, by gathering together not only all the firſt-fruits, from among Jews and Gentiles, but alſo the full harveſt, of which theſe are a certain pledge, in what a complete and glorious ſenſe will the following lines of the pious poet Mr Cowper, which he addreſſes to Meſſiah, be realized!

"Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one as radiant as the reſt,
Due to thy laſt and moſt effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conqueſt of a world."

Some cannot bear the thought that living waters ſhould be repreſented as entering into the lake of the ſecond death; tho' it cannot be denied, that the prophet expreſsly predicts what imports this in figure. He ſaw in viſion the living waters that iſſued out from under the threſhold of the temple, going into the dead ſea, or the lake of Sodom, which is allowed to be a figure of hell itſelf, Ezek. xlvii. But I would remind them of ſomething more wonderful than living waters flowing into the fiery lake, and there deſtroying the ſecond death. Hell was prepared of old for the devil and his angels, and the breath of the Almighty is ſaid, like a ſtream of brimſtone, to kindle its devouring flames. The breath and Spirit of God are ſynonimous terms; and where his Spirit is, there is liberty, and by him he breathes on the ſlain, and cauſes them to live. Is it at all ſurpriſing to find God working in a region of his own creation, and there ſhewing wonders on the dead, and his faithfulneſs in deſtruction? Pſal. lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12. But that he ſhould enter into a fountain wholly impregnated by the venom of the old ſerpent, and which daily ſends forth ſtreams of polluted waters; that he ſhould deign to work in a cage full of unclean and hateful birds, is certainly more wonderful. Such, however, is the heart of every impenitent ſinner; and when the Chriſtian reflects that ſuch was his own heart, when God took poſſeſſion of it, by his grace and Spirit, why ſhould he think it incredible, that the Lord ſhould cauſe living waters to flow into that region, where his own breath had been ſo long employed in fanning the flames of the great furnace of fire? Why ſhould it be thought incredible that God ſhould raiſe the dead, and begin a work in their diſmal abode, to be had in everlaſting remembrance?

In the chaotic ſtate of creation, the Holy Spirit moved on the face of the great deep, or abyſs, which was a figure of hell, and there produced the fiſh in the waters, and the fowls out of the waters, which was a ſhadow of good things to come, that are to be realized, in my humble opinion, in the new creation. Doth not our Lord daily announce his ſaving voice in the grave of ſpiritual death, the filthieſt hell in the univerſe, and there cauſe the dead to hear its joyful ſound? The prophet tells us that the kings of the earth will be gathered to-

gether, and ſhut up cloſe priſoners in a dungeon, but that they ſhall be viſited again after many days, Iſa. xxiv. Does not the Pſalmiſt ſay, "It is he that giveth ſalvation unto kings?" Pſal. cxliv. 10. The heathen, or the nations, ſhall fear the name of the Lord; and all the kings of the earth thy glory," Pſal. cii. 15. If thoſe who have been generally ringleaders in apoſtacy from God, and rebellion againſt him, too often uſurping his titles, and invading his province, ſhall, notwithſtanding, be viſited after they are many days ſhut up in priſon, and have ſalvation ſent to them, yea, ſing in the ways of the Lord, when they hear the words of his mouth, even all the kings of the earth, Pſal. cxxxviii. 4, 5. can we exclude their people from the ſame privilege? I conceive that kings are mentioned in particular, even all the kings of the earth, to ſhew the abſolute certainty of the recovery of the reſt of mankind.—Upon this extenſive view of our Lord's ſaving work, the apoſtle might well found his prayer for his Chriſtian brethren, "And the Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love one toward another, and toward *all* men, even as we do toward you," 1 Theſſ. iii. 12. Did he view matters in the light of the received doctrine, with what conſiſtency could he pray, that they might abound in ſuch love toward *all* men, as he and his fellow-apoſtles had toward them? which doubtleſs included an ardent deſire, and lively hope of their ſalvation. How could he lift up holy hands in ſuch a prayer, without doubting, if he believed, as ſome profeſs to do, that not one for ſome thouſands of mankind ſhall be ſaved, or benefited by the death of Chriſt? But I venture to ſay, that neither Paul, nor any of his brethren, believed, or preached, any ſuch doctrine; for they do not ſeem to have ſo learned Chriſt.

Does not the ſentence to be paſſed on the wicked at the laſt day, object ſome, exclude all hope or poſſibility of their reſtoration? "Depart from me, ye *curſed*, into *everlaſting* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Mat. xxv. 41. A little attention will ſuffice to ſhew, that there is nothing in this ſentence which can militate againſt the reſtoration, when the words that expreſs that ſentence are properly underſtood. Seeing the original term, from which the word rendered *everlaſting* is derived, denotes only a period of limited, tho' unknown duration, how can the word derived from it intend endleſs duration, or be employed to expreſs what ſhall never have an end? We have our Lord's authority for aſſerting that the former means only a limited period, "The harveſt (ſays he) is the end of the *world*, *the conſummation of the age*, a plain proof that it cannot intend eternity, as that can have no end, Mat. xiii. 39. In his parting promiſe to his diſciples, the very ſame phraſe occurs, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the *end of the world*," or of the goſpel diſpenſation, Mat. xxviii. 20. Another plain proof that our Lord did not mean to convey the idea of eternity by the word which he uſed, and he certainly knew the meaning of language as well as thoſe who preſume in oppoſition to him, to make it import abſolute eternity. Can that which is finite in its import, our Lord being judge, be the root or parent of a word that denotes infinite duration? Eternity is one, and is not divided by time, as is uſually thought. God himſelf is its only inhabitant; for all creatures, whether in this world, or in the other, are ſtill in time, and will be till our Lord deliver up *his kingdom* to his Father, when God will be all in all; which

imports that no impurity or diſorder ſhall then exiſt among them. Eternity has been repreſented by the figure of a ſerpent holding its tail in its mouth, or by a circle. What is time but like a ſmall ſegment in this circle, which ſtill remains entire? All the ages of time, or all the for ever and evers of ſcripture, are but ſo many parts of this ſmall ſegment, the whole being bounded by the duration of Meſſiah's reign, which is called, Pſal. cxlv. 13. margin, *a kingdom of all the ages*, or, if we will, of all the eternities. The duration of time, or the ſucceſſion of day and night, is mentioned, Rev. xiv. 11. and xx. 10. as coeval with the *for ever and ever*, or the ages of ages, during which thoſe who are there particulariſed, ſhall be tormented, and have no reſt. In the original in theſe two paſſages, the language is the ſtrongeſt to expreſs duration that occurs any where that I recollect in ſcripture; and yet the periods, or ages of ages mentioned, ſo far from denoting proper eternity, the text itſelf plainly ſhews that they do not ſo much as enter into it; one of the cleareſt proofs words can convey that future miſery ſhall not be eternal, in the ſtrict and proper ſenſe of that term, or in the ſenſe that an Engliſh reader underſtands it. As before the commencement of time, neither ſin nor miſery exiſted; ſo ſin and miſery ſhall be extinct in the univerſe when time ſhall be no more.

Our Lord is called the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt, with regard to all the ages of his adminiſtration, and all the works to be accompliſhed in them. When he is called the *everlaſting Father*, Iſa. ix. 6. this does not refer to the duration of his exiſtence, or any thing eſſential to him, but only to the nature of his peculiar adminiſtration, it being one of his mediatory titles. But tho' we need not reſtrict the meaning of the terms *everlaſting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, &c. to their uſual import, when they are applied to God, yet that is no reaſon why we ſhould extend them beyond their fixed meaning, when applied to future puniſhment, becauſe there is nothing in the nature of that ſubject to render ſuch extenſion neceſſary. Thus we find the word *everlaſting* denoting two very different durations, in the ſame verſe, Hab. iii. 6. the duration of the mountains, which will be melted down in the general conflagration, at the end of the preſent ſyſtem, and the duration of God's ways, which are there alſo ſaid to be everlaſting, and will doubtleſs far tranſcend the boundaries of this mundane ſyſtem. The different acceptations of the term, in this paſſage, ariſing from the different nature of the ſubject to which it is attached, affords a deciſive anſwer to the objection, thought ſo formidable, founded on Mat. xxv. 46. as if the miſery of the wicked muſt be of equal duration with the happineſs of the righteous, becauſe the ſame term is annexed to the life of the one, and the puniſhment or death of the other. Elſewhere I have obſerved, that the life then entered on, is the life of glory with, and under Chriſt, in the new Jeruſalem, not the life which ſhall be enjoyed under the Father's immediate reign, when God ſhall be all in all; and ſo there is a connection betwixt its duration, and the unknown ages of the puniſhment of the wicked. It is a miſtake, in my opinion, to think, that the Scriptures often ſpeak of a proper eternity; for they appear to me to be as ſilent, reſpecting what ſhall ſucceed our Lord's *delivery up of his kingdom* to the Father, all which is ſummed up in this ſhort

but expreſſive phraſe, *that God may be all in all*, 1 Cor. xv. 28. as they are of the duration that preceded the commencement of Meſſiah's reign.

Everlaſting fire muſt therefore intend a puniſhment or correction awfully ſevere in its meaſure, yet limited in point of duration. This fire is ſaid to have been prepared for the devil and his angels, and not for the human race, which certainly marks ſome diſtinction. Moral evil, not having its natural root in the works of God, and being merely an incidental diſorder, occaſioned by the loſs of original rectitude, it is difficult to conceive how it can maintain its root in them without end, and that by the expreſs will and permiſſion of him that gave them being; while he is repreſented as employing means the moſt effectual to purge it away. But unleſs it always retain its root in God's works, tho' not a plant of our heavenly Father's planting, whence our Lord declares it ſhall be rooted up, miſery cannot be the endleſs portion of any of his creatures. To be doomed to depart from the Judge accurſed, is no proof that the wicked ſhall remain under the curſe to all eternity. The apoſtle ſays of Chriſtians themſelves, "We were by nature children of wrath, even as others;" and we find a curſe denounced upon every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. But does this preclude ſinners from believing with the heart in Chriſt for righteouſneſs? What God does in one caſe, he may in another if he will; whence it is obvious that a perſon under the curſe, or malediction, whether executed or not, may be delivered from it; and the doctrine of reſtoration ſhews how the ſubjects of the curſe, or of miſery, ſhall be brought to poſſeſs that faith, to which ſuch deliverance is promiſed. Of our Lord himſelf, it is ſaid, that he was made a curſe for us, or was devoted for a time to ſufferings; for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree. But it was impoſſible that he ſhould have been always held by that curſe, whence his ſufferings terminated when their end was accompliſhed. Is it then poſſible that he ſhall never ſee of the travail of his ſoul, to his ſatisfaction, in millions for whom he died, and gave himſelf a ranſom? or that theſe ſhall endure the curſe to all eternity, in their own perſons, for whom he once ſubmitted to bear it? and that he bare it for all, took away the ſin of the world, and is the propitiation for the whole world, his word repeatedly and expreſsly aſſures us.—Does not all this ſhew, that the curſe is not neceſſarily attached to any of its ſubjects, without remedy, or ſo as to make its removal impoſſible? Does it not ſay, that the cup of the red wine of God's wrath, which is full of mixture, may be drunk, even to the dregs, and yet the ſufferers be afterwards bleſſed? The Lord ſolemnly declares, that all the wicked of the earth ſhall drink this cup, even every drop that ſhall be wrung from the very dregs, Pſal. lxxv. 8. and yet *all* fleſh, which muſt include all mankind, are exhorted to bleſs his holy name for ever and for ever, Pſal. cxlv. 21. which plainly imports that he will yet give them abundant cauſe. We alſo find all his works, in all places of his dominions, exhorted to bleſs him, Pſal. ciii, 22; but can we ſuppoſe that a righteous and merciful God will tantalize his miſerable creatures—that he would ever exhort the wretched captives of endleſs woe to bleſs him, while ſuffering inexpreſſible and endleſs torments from his hand? and yet the inhabitants of hell

are included in the exhortation, that being one of the all places in Jehovah's dominions, no mean proof that they ſhall be at laſt brought to bleſs the Author of their exiſtence, and their Reſtorer to moral rectitude and bleſs. Thoſe who think and ſay, that God thus addreſſes creatures whom he dooms to never-ending miſery, and ordained, infinite ages before they exiſted, by an abſolute and irreverſible decree, to that deſtruction, do him little honour, and appear really not to know the character he has given of himſelf, whom to know is eternal life. We have reaſon to regard ſuch exhortations as expreſſive of God's merciful purpoſe reſpecting all his works; and the exhauſting of the bitter cup of miſery, even the dregs of it, plainly aſcertains the future extinction of the curſe conſequent upon ſin, and, of courſe, of ſin itſelf, the procuring cauſe of that curſe. This inference, from the above plain reaſoning, muſt appear, in my humble opinion, concluſive to all, whoſe minds are not ſo warped in favor of ſome particular ſyſtem, as not to give the ſubject a cool examination. If productive of this effect on the minds of any, my dwelling on this objection longer than I intended, is not labour in vain.

But does not Jude repreſent the inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrha, and adjacent cities, as "ſuffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire;" and the fallen angels as already "reſerved in *everlaſting* chains?" Does not this render the reſtoration of either quite hopeleſs? So one would think, at firſt ſight; but attention to the paſſage itſelf will ſhew that it affords no proof of the unceaſing duration of future miſery, however often referred to as one of the ſtrongeſt proofs. I wave here Ezekiel's expreſs prediction of the future reſtoration of Sodom and her daughters, chap. xvi. 53, 55, having adverted to it elſewhere. The accompliſhment of that prediction appears to me quite inconſiſtent with the ſenſe uſually given of the paſſage in Jude. But let us obſerve, that theſe inhabitants are ſaid to be ſet forth as an example, by ſuffering that vengeance; whence we may infer that it cannot intend what they endure in the unſeen world; becauſe by that they are not ſet forth as an example to the living, the thing the apoſtle has evidently in eye. To none but God is hell naked, and deſtruction without a covering. Commentators therefore juſtly conſider the *eternal fire*, the vengeance of which they are ſaid to ſuffer, as referring to that deſtruction of the cities of the plain, which preſented to all nations a ſolemn monument of God's abhorrence of ſin, and determined purpoſe to puniſh it. The Jewiſh hiſtorian tells us, that the dreadfully avenging fire then kindled, continued to burn to his time, for about two thouſand years, enough to juſtify the expreſſion, *eternal fire*, according to the ſcripture acceptation of the original phraſe. The word rendered *ſuffering*, leterally denotes *held* or *put under*, *ſubjected to*, *undergoing*; and may juſtly apply to the fire that deſtroyed the natural lives of the inhabitants, and their dwellings and property, and preyed ſo long on the extenſive ſulphurous lake, produced, in the fertile plain of Jordan, by that ſignal judgment of the Almighty.

The *everlaſting chains*, in which the fallen angels are ſaid to be reſerved, are not extended, by the text, beyond the day of judgment; and conſequently cannot be properly eternal—*reſerved unto the judgment of the great day*. That they are not the ſame chains in which they will be bound after that day

is obvious; becauſe their preſent chains leave them in the ſtate of priſoners at large, permitting them to range up and down in the earth, and go about ſeeking whom they may devour.—The original word rendered everlaſting here is not αἰωνιος, tranſlated *eternal* in the next verſe, but ἀιδιοτης, which, from its etimology, may be rendered *unſeen, inviſible, unknown.* It is the ſame word that is applied to the power and divinity of God, Rom. i. 20. becauſe men know but a very ſmall part of his power, or ſee but little of its effects, and can form no adequate idea of his deity. This Job beautifully expreſſes, after ſurveying ſeveral of his works, "Lo, theſe are part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can underſtand?" chap. xxvi. 14. This word therefore does not convey the idea of endleſs duration, or indeed of duration at all, but is applied to ſomething that is to men unknown, or inviſible, or that exceeds their powers of inveſtigation and reſearch.

Some think that what is ſaid of the wicked, Pſal. cxlv. 20. Prov. x. 28. xi. 7. and elſewhere, That the Lord will deſtroy them all, and that their hope and expectation ſhall periſh at death, is inconſiſtent with any after reſtoration; but both can take place in the ſame perſons in their ſeaſon. A ſtate of apoſtacy from God is deſtruction; "O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf;" but the Lord delivers from this ſtate. Natural death deſtroys the bodies of the righteous as well as of the wicked, whence the good or godly man himſelf is ſaid to periſh out of the earth, Mic. vii. 2. yet the Lord will raiſe them up, and glorify the former. To deſtroy all the wicked then, is to ſubject them to the ſecond death, which is emphatically termed deſtruction; but to the Lord belong the iſſues from death, and he it is who ſhall make all things new. Whatever hopes the wicked may entertain from the world muſt periſh at death; and equally fallacious will prove their expectation of immediate acceſs then to heaven. It is ſaid, The hope of the hypocrite ſhall periſh, when God taketh away his ſoul; and does not our Lord repreſent this as verified in the fooliſh virgins? The prophet repreſents their caſe by that of a man who dreams he is eating and drinking, but he awakes, and his ſoul is faint, and he has appetite. But can this diſappointment, or the miſery that ſucceeds it, be a bar to their recovery in the Lord's good time and way? It is one excellency of the Univerſal doctrine, that it reconciles the apparent contradictions of ſcripture, and ſhews how the divine threatenings and promiſes will be all fulfilled in their ſeaſon; each having their full ſcope under Meſſiah's adminiſtration. It reſts on the character, perfections, and deſigns of the Almighty, as exhibited in his word, inculcated by the general ſcope and tendency of ſcripture, and confirmed and illuſtrated by all his works. Does the oppoſite doctrine reſt on a baſis ſo broad and immutable, which builds its tremendous fabric of endleſs torments on a few detached phraſes, arbitrarily explained and applied contrary to their known and obvious meaning in almoſt innumerable paſſages of ſcripture?

Some ſhelter themſelves under the ſovereignty and juſtice of God, when they are at a loſs for argument to ſupport their hypotheſis, and object that theſe require the eternal miſery of the wicked, and that we muſt not examine into the reaſons. This is giving no very favourable view of the divine adminiſtration.

Tho' God is not bound to give his creatures any account of his matters, yet he deigns to do it, and where he has done it, it is our duty and intereſt, to liſten, examine, and believe. The objection plainly ſuppoſes, that God acts as a ſovereign in a manner that will not bear rational inveſtigation, and that there is ſomething in his juſtice that will always ſtand in the way of making his miſerable creatures happy; a ſuppoſition that muſt proceed, in my opinion, from ignorance of the Divine character and word. For God to act as a Sovereign, is to act agreeable to his own will, and that will is revealed in the word of truth. But he can never will to act in oppoſition to this; for he will never deny himſelf, nor falſify his word. His frequent addreſſes to his ancient people, by his prophets, plainly ſhew, that inſtead of forbidding them to enquire into the nature of his procedure, he urges it as their duty, and as the mean of perceiving the equity of his adminiſtration, and the guilt of their own conduct, viewed in contraſt. "Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord.—Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.—Hear now, O houſe of Iſrael; is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" Our Lord ſpoke to the Jews, in his days, in a ſimilar manner; "How is it, that ye do not diſcern this time? yea, and why even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right?" The more the ways of God are examined and known, the more glorious and worthy of himſelf, and the more friendly and benign to his creatures, will they appear. It is the ſin and loſs of men that they neglect this delightful duty; and thoſe who diſſuade them from it counteract his gracious deſigns; for tho' the works of God are great, and cannot be known to perfection; yet the Pſalmiſt tells us, that they are "ſought out of them that have pleaſure therein," Pſal. cxi. 3. Our ideas of the nature and tendency of his works will be proper, ſo far as they correſpond to the reality; but adequate ideas of them we cannot have, unleſs we could unravel his whole plan, and trace the mutual connection and dependence of every part; what is perhaps the attainment of no being in exiſtence, but of him whoſe underſtanding is infinite.

The nature and province of divine juſtice ſeem to be generally miſunderſtood. It is generally granted, that goodneſs and juſtice are attributes equally inherent in God; but how often are theſe repreſented as ſtanding in oppoſition to each other, in their exerciſe? which falſe notion, the proper knowledge of his eſſential unity would at once correct. So far as ſeverity proceeds from God, this is not eſſential to his juſtice, but accidental, in conſequence of the defection of his creatures, the cure of which makes this neceſſary; and even then juſtice acts with perfect equity. But ſeeing God is eſſentially good, he acts agreeable to his nature in communicating of his goodneſs, and making his creatures happy; whereas his inflicting puniſhment for their rebellious conduct, he calls his *ſtrange work*, in which he has no delight, and himſelf in doing it, a *man of war*; but in ſhewing mercy, *the God of peace*. When the ſcriptures ſpeak of God's *hatred, vengeance, wrath, and fury*, as proceeding from his juſtice, theſe terms do not reſpect the ſtate of his mind towards the works of his hands, but the conduct of his providence, and that as taking vengeance on their *inventions*, that he may reſcue the wretched captives from the ſnares of the fear-

ful pit which their own hands have made. When they ſuffer by this, they have themſelves, and not their Maker to blame; "Wo unto their ſouls, for they have rewarded evil unto themſelves," Iſa. iii. 9. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;" or, as the margin reads it, "he does not afflict *from his heart*," Lam. iii. 33. *If we confeſs our ſins*, ſays John, *he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs*. In the ſalvation of mankind, juſtice is no leſs concerned than mercy. The former, inſtead of obſtructing, aids the benign ends of the latter; for juſtice cannot ſuffer any thing that is contrary to its own nature to ſubſiſt, without oppoſing it, and by that oppoſition will effect its total deſtruction at length. Thus *our God*, acting juſtly, *is a conſuming fire*, to deſtroy, as not merely uſeleſs, but degrading, defiling, and pernicious, whatever cannot abide the fire.

Seeing goodneſs and wrath, mercy and revenge, cannot ſubſiſt together, were God's juſtice what many repreſent it to be, he muſt ceaſe to be juſt whenever he communicates his goodneſs, in the form of mercy; or ceaſe to be good and merciful, ſo often as he exerciſes his juſtice. Immutability is an eſſential attribute of abſolute perfection. Seeing it is manifeſt that God ſeeks the good of his creatures at a certain period of their exiſtence, and that in perfect agreeableneſs to his own nature, we are reduced to the alternative of granting, either that he will always ſeek their good, or that he has changed. The Pſalmiſt tells us, "The Lord is good to *all*; and his tender mercies are over *all* his works:" and himſelf ſays, "I am the Lord, I change not," Pſal. cxlv. 9. Mal. iii. 6. If then the Lord be good to all, and ſeeks the good of all; can the greater part remain always miſerable? He is called *a juſt God and a Saviour*; and ſaid to be *juſt* in juſtifying the ungodly that believe in Jeſus, to ſhew there is no repugnancy between juſtice and mercy in him, as many ſeem to think. We have indeed heard of the Battle of the Divine Attributes, which may ſound very well as the title of a popular ſermon; but does not accord with the unity of Deity, or the ſimplicity of the divine character. That the retribution of juſtice flows from goodneſs or mercy, or is under its direction and influence, appears to me evident from the following paſſage: "Alſo unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou rendereſt to every man according to his work," Pſal. lxii. 12. What an amiable and important view does the Pſalmiſt give us of the province of juſtice under the Divine adminiſtration, when he repreſents her as the Lord's harbinger, preparing his rebellious ſubjects for a friendly interview! "*righteouſneſs*," or, as the metrical verſion has it, "juſtice ſhall go before him, and ſhall ſet us in the way of his ſteps," Pſal. lxxxv. 13. even in wiſdom's ways, which are pleaſantneſs and peace.

It has been objected, (for what will not ſome men obj &?) Why doom the wicked to hell at all, if they are to be delivered from it at any future period? Do priſons ſerve no other purpoſe but to torment thoſe who are ſhut up in them, and confine them for life? Have we not our correction-houſes, that are intended to reclaim the lawleſs and diſobedient, who diſturb the peace of ſociety? and all priſons, if under proper regulation, would be conducted on the ſame plan. One ſolitary individual, reclaimed to virtue and ſociety, would do

more honour to these establishments, than the hordes of hardened wretches that they annually pour forth to the gibbet. And where is the harm should we view hell as the great correction-house of the universe, intended for the destruction of the impenitent sinner, only as a mean of separating his sins from him, and of recovering him to the end of his existence, a capacity of glorifying and enjoying his Maker? The far greater part of Christians view hell as a dreadful Bastile that receives its millions of human beings annually, but will never return any. What would we think of such a Bastile among men, or of the one lately destroyed in a neighbouring country? Would we not conclude that there must be something very defective in the nature of that government, under which such an institution found place? The universal doctrine does not send the wicked to hell, to satisfy for their sins, and so procure their release, as its advocates are slanderously represented; they resting the restoration wholly on the mediation of Jesus, and not on the sufferings or merits of any creature. The same objection equally lies against God's dealings with his people on earth; Why does he exercise them with manifold tribulations, and cast them into many a furnace, seeing he means at length completely to save them? For that very reason he corrects them; for what son is there whom the Father loveth and chasteneth not? If Christ learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and was made perfect thro' sufferings; how much more do guilty creatures need sufferings, in order to teach them obedience, and make them perfect? Can it then appear strange, that God should send those to hell, who remain unreclaimed in the present state, should he intend to shew mercy upon them at length, and bless them? Let Christians, therefore, beware of arraigning the government of their heavenly Father, in their zeal to support the common doctrine, and of thrusting themselves into the throne of their common Judge, to doom whomsoever they please to relentless woe.

God made all things at first good, which included their happiness according to their nature. Holiness is the health, the beauty, and vigour of the soul—the sound state of the whole man; and whatever tends to subdue and destroy sin, which is its very opposite, the disease, deformity, and debility of the inward man, at the same time promotes its holiness, or removes the obstacles to its recovery and happiness. The goodness of God is to lead us to repentance; and the gifts he bestows, that we may be holy and unblameable before him in love. To object, Of what use is the death of Christ to the wicked, seeing they are to suffer so long in their own persons? argues the want of attention to the subject. It is easy to raise similar objections against God's known procedure in other cases. May it not be as well objected, Why does God suffer some, whom he means to reclaim in this life, to remain so long strangers to his truth—to go on, perhaps for many years, in a course of open disobedience to his laws? Why he delivers not his people from that abominable and troublesome guest sin, at once, seeing he means to do it at length? and why he subjects them to so many tribulations, and to natural death, in the way to the kingdom, and has doomed their bodies to corrupt, and lie so long in the grave, seeing he has given his Son to the death for them? It is as reasonable to object in the one case as in the other, provided the Scriptures make it appear, that there shall be a restitution of all things, in the

ſenſe contended for. In every ſuch caſe a Chriſtian ſhould be ſatisfied with his Lord's reaſon; "Even ſo, Father; for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight."

The future puniſhment of the wicked, who die impenitent, is neceſſary to verify ſcripture—to diſcover the demerit of ſin, and the awful effects of deſpiſing the divine warnings and goodneſs. And the death of Chriſt anſwers a moſt noble purpoſe to them, if they are ever to be reſtored; becauſe not any thing produced in them by their ſufferings, or any purifying effects of theſe ſufferings, as ſome vainly ſuppoſe, ſhall be the ground of their final releaſe; but only the mercy of God, as venting itſelf thro' the mediation of his Son, and embraced by the renovating power of his ſpirit, revealing the truth to the inward man. And is it not alſo worthy of God, who does nothing in vain, to make the extreme miſery of the ſecond death a mean of preventing, in all its ſubjects a relapſe into the love and commiſſion of iniquity; and alſo of increaſing their love, gratitude, and praiſe to their glorious Deliverer to all eternity? In this view, I admit, the church of the firſt-born may reap advantage from it alſo, as enhancing their gratitude and joy for their preſervation from a miſery which they alſo deſerved, in common with the reſt of mankind. In this view they may greatly profit by the limited puniſhment of their brethren; but to repreſent them as rejoicing at it, upon the common ſyſtem, is to libel their character.

Objections ſo multiply upon me, and unwilling to overlook any that may ſeem material, knowing many think nothing done in proving a doctrine, while a ſingle objection againſt it remains unanſwered, I muſt beg leave to occupy another letter with ſome farther anſwers. Meantime, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Cordially yours, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

We were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the goſpel of God with much contention.—Wo is me, a man of ſtrife, and of contention—every one of them doth curſe me.—I am in deriſion daily, every one mocketh me.—The word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a deriſion daily; for I heard the defaming of many, Report, ſay they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting.—And many of them ſaid, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?
1 Theſſ. ii. 2. Jer. v. 10. xx. 7, 8, 10. John x. 20.

Dear Sir,

IN ſearching the ſcriptures of truth, the thought has forcibly ſtruck my mind for ſome time back, that the common mode of interpreting them unwarrantably confines their import, much within what the Holy Spirit has intended. Why ſhould the following, and ſimilar paſſages, be expounded with ſuch reſtrictions, as circumſcribe their accompliſhment within narrow bounds,—bounds much narrower than the language will admit. "*Every* valley ſhall be exalted, and *every*

mountain and hill ſhall be made low: and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed, and *all* fleſh ſhall ſee it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it," Iſa. xl. 4, 5. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds," or "griefs" as on the margin. The Lord is merciful and gracious, ſlow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever," Pſal. cxlvii. 3.—ciii. 8, 9. "The Lord looſeth the priſoners—the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind—the Lord raiſeth them that are bowed down; upholdeth *all* that fall, raiſeth up *all* thoſe that be bowed down," Pſal. cxlvi. 8. 14. Theſe are general declarations, and why ſhould deference to human ſyſtems lead us to confine them? Tho' "the Lord caſteth the wicked down to the ground; yet he taketh pleaſure in them that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his mercy," Pſal. cxlvii. 6,—11. Will all the pains he will be at with the priſoners of the ſecond death, produce no fear or reverence for him, and never induce them to hope in his mercy? We grant that "the anger of the Lord ſhall not return until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart," Jer. xxiii. 20.; but his word gives reaſon to hope, that theſe thoughts are thoughts of mercy and peace, to give ſuch an end as corrected children would expect and deſire from a father, who hates caſting off for ever, and has deviſed means to reſtore his baniſhed. Tho' many will not now conſider or believe this; yet the prophet adds, "that in the latter days they ſhall conſider it perfectly." Cyrus, whoſe name ſignifies Chriſt, or anointed, tho' a heathen, had the honour to typify the great Meſſiah, Will the Lord never do for his own Son, as antitype, what he promiſed and fulfilled for Cyrus as type? "Thus ſaith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whoſe right hand I have holden, or *ſtrengthened*, to ſubdue nations before him: and I will looſe the loyns of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates ſhall not be ſhut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places ſtraight: I will break in pieces the gates of braſs, and cut in ſunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treaſures of darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places, that thou mayeſt know, that I the Lord, who call thee by thy name, am the God of Iſrael," Iſa. xl. 1, 2, 3,—In the 107th Pſalm, we find this realized under Meſſiah's reign. But the common doctrine will not permit Chriſt the honour to poſſeſs *the treaſures of darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places*, even the loſt nations of the world, tho' his Father has given theſe to him, and he has accepted of them as his poſſeſſion and inheritance. According to it, the darkneſs will always retain its treaſures, and the ſecret places their hidden riches. Let men diſpoſe of their own property as they pleaſe, but let them not preſume to diſpoſe of Meſſiah's property and inheritance, at diſcretion, without allowing him the power of reclaiming it; as if they were determined to ſupport the devil's ſupremacy to all eternity, and ſecure to him, as his vaſſals, the far greater part of God's intelligent creatures throughout endleſs duration, thus making him a far greater prince than Chriſt, inaſmuch as he is allowed thouſands of ſubjects for one that Meſſiah ſhall recover from his tyrannic power. Solomon tells us, that "many waters *cannot quench* love, neither can the floods drown it," Songs viii. 7. Does not

God love all his creatures, as the work of his hands? and did he not love the fallen angels, when they ſhone bright in his image? Is it then true that the waters of apoſtacy have quenched his love? and that the floods of iniquity have drowned it? Had this really been the caſe, we would not have had ſuch exhortations as theſe in his word, "Let every thing that hath breath praiſe the Lord; let them praiſe the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created." Amen, ſo let it be.

It is not a little ſurpriſing, that the names of the ten antediluvian patriarchs, of whom we read, Gen. v. contain, when connected in their ſucceſſive order, one of the moſt remarkable prophecies of human miſery, and of the means and extent of that recovery which the goſpel reveals. They may be thus rendered into Engliſh;—*Earth-ſprung man, being placed in, or appointed to, a miſerable diſcipline or preparation ſtate, the praiſed God*, or *the praiſer*, or *glorifier of God, deſcending, ruling, teaching, his death ſending, or procuring to the poor, debaſed, ſtricken, reſt, comfort, and conſolation.* But if, inſtead of *ſelah*, or *ſhelah*, *ſending*, *producing*, *reſt*, the laſt part of the compounded proper name, *Methuſelah*, we read *Siloh*, or *Shiloh*, one of our Lord's titles, which denotes *peace, ſalvation*, a different verſion may be given, as alſo from the different meanings of the other proper names. The words *Shelah* and *Shiloh* are the ſame in the Hebrew text, the only difference being in the vowel points. The import of theſe names may be thus connected and expreſſed.—Man comely and beautiful when created, and joined in love to God, and to all creatures, eſpecially his ſpouſe *, became earthy, by coveting and eating forbidden fruit, was appointed to a wretched, deſperate condition of pain and ſorrow; but he that praiſeth and glorifieth God, coming down as the conſecrated teacher, his death procures the peace and ſalvation of the needy, depreſſed and ſmitten offenders, whoſe reſt, comforter and conſolation he ſhall prove †?

* The reader may ſee the ſubſtance of the above paraphraſtic expoſition, in Mr Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, under the proper name Adam. Here the different ſenſes of ſome of the proper names are inſerted, and the paraphraſe only connects them.

† While writing the above, the ground is covered with ſnow, and the ſky ſtill giving more, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it, like flakes of wool. During the inclement ſeaſon, and juſt now, many, not only of the youth, but alſo of the adult, have recourſe to the inhuman practice of deſtroying, with fire arms, &c. the harmleſs birds, that ſeek ſhelter in the hedges, and vicinity of the abodes of men. Not a few fall victims to this cruel amuſement, which aggravates diſtreſs, and violates all the rights of hoſpitality.

This brought to my recollection what I have repeatedly heard remarked of the preſent Ducheſs of Buccleugh, how ſhe annually appoints ſo much barley for the birds of the air, during the ſtorms of winter; and, when at home, takes pleaſure in feeding them in perſon, while they regularly flock around with confidence, expecting their uſual boon from her hand.—Here the plumy tribes find ample proviſion in the ſtorm, while their Creator's wonted bounty is, in a great meaſure, ſealed up; and friendly protection all the year. All are charged not to moleſt the innocent penſioners, while rearing their young; nor are any permitted to ſcare or affright the little warblers, while they hop from ſpray to ſpray, or flock around the friendly manſion. All this kind care and attention they amply reward, by making the extenſive incloſures the place of their fixed reſort, and by recreating themſelves around the noble proprietors and their numerous viſitants, with all that unſuſpecting confidence, which ſuch treatment inſpires in the breaſts even of the irrational tribes, and with their conſtant flutter and cheerful ſongs, the whole a faint picture of Paradiſe.

Here we have, in miniature, a diſtant ſhadow of the primeval ſtate of things, and of that mutual confidence and attachment, which ſhall ſubſiſt among the various works of creation,

Who would not rejoice that Meſſiah ſhould yet realize all this to all the poor, degraded, and puniſhed works of his hands? We find him addreſſing a very wicked people, under the awful viſitation of the Almighty, "O my threſhing, and the corn of my floor," Iſa. xxi. 10. The huſbandman will not take the trouble of threſhing what is merely ſtraw and chaff; but the Lord calls the ſubjects of his ſevereſt judgments, *the corn*, or, as in the Hebrew, *the ſon of his floor*; intimating that all thus puniſhed ſhall not be loſt—that he has an intereſt in them, and ſtands to them in a near ralation. While he treats ſinners as the corn of his floor, however much chaff and refuſe may adhere to them, to me it is a plain intimation, that he does not totally forſake them.

Of the ten antediluvian patriarchs, Adam, the firſt, and Noah the laſt, were the fulleſt types of Meſſiah, who is the Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt. What Lamech ſaid, at the birth of Noah his ſon, "This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground which the Lord hath curſed," Gen. v. 29. applies in the fulleſt and moſt glorious ſenſe to the Meſſiah. Noah was a reſt to men, by the ark that he built, which contained the ſeminary of the church and the world;—by his uſeful inventions in agriculture, &c. which greatly diminiſhed that labour which the curſe of the earth, for the ſin of Adam, and the murder of Abel, occaſioned; and ameliorated the outward condition of man;—and eſpecially by his labours of love as a preacher of righteouſneſs, which he would not diſcontinue after the flood. It was in the earth, after the waters of the deluge abated, that this was chiefly realized; and it will be in the new, or renovated earth, after the dread fiery ſurges of the burning lake ſhall have ſpent their rage, of which Noah's deluge was a figure, that the Lord will cauſe mankind to reſt, after enduring the dread toils and miſeries that reſult from the curſe, or from the ſins of men, the parent of that curſe.—But it is time I ſhould reſume the anſwer of ſome other objections.

when man is thoroughly reconciled to his Maker, and every object aſſumes a friendly aſpect. Deity will regard with complacency a conduct ſo like his own, whoſe tender care expands over all the works of his hands, eſpecially when that conduct is not the effect of a partial humanity, which, like the legs of the lame, are not equal. To ſee a perſon of noble rank, and extenſive fortune—a perſon verſant in the etiquette of courts, and in all the ſplendour and elegant gaities of polite life, ſtepping forth from her manſion, amidſt froſt and ſnow, to feed the little tenants of the grove, that flock on wing around, each waiting for his portion from her hand, and all ſhewing their gratitude a thouſand different ways, reminds one of Eve, our common mother, receiving, amidſt the bowers of Paradiſe, the daily homage of the feathered choriſters, whoſe melodious concert was the firſt ſong of praiſe the ever-bleſſed Creator received on earth. In the eye of enlightened reaſon, ſuch imitation of the Divine beneficence, adds more true dignity to our nature than all the tinſel glare of worldly greatneſs, or the brilliant decorations of a birth-day. May the great and noble of the earth form their taſte and character on ſuch models; and then ſhall they ſecure the eſteem and attachment of their inferiors, nor once have cauſe to dread the degradation of their rank in the ſocial ſcale.

One of the moſt delightful walks the writer recollects ever to have had, was on a Lord's day morning, in the pleaſant ſeaſon of the year, when paſſing, by the porter's permiſſion, thro' theſe princely incloſures, in his way to preach to a congregation not far thence. Betwixt the melody of birds, the view of a herd of does and deer, grazing with their young among the cattle, and the verdure and beauty of the ſurrounding ſylvan ſcene, the mind was ſo engaged with the impreſſive Creator's bounty, diffuſed throughout all his works, as led to adopt, with cordial pleaſure, the poet's beautiful deſcription, which he puts in the mouth of our firſt progenitor:—

"Theſe are thy works, Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this univerſal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair, thyſelf how wond'rous then!"

Many urge the ſimilitudes of Scripture, in which God is compared to a potter, and his creatures to clay in his hand, as a reaſon of his having predeſtinated ſome to eternal miſery, as veſſels made to diſhonour, and inflicting that miſery upon them; and others to a ſtate of endleſs honour and happineſs. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour and another unto diſhonour," Rom. ix. 21. God's power and right to do with his own what he pleaſeth none ought or can diſpute. This power over his creatures, their actions, and over all things, is a joyful truth, becauſe it can never be miſapplied, being under the direction of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs. If he has made known to us in his word for what purpoſe he exerciſes this unlimited power, we are ſurely bound to believe him, and to acquieſce. There we are told, that he has made all things for himſelf—that as all things are by him as Creator, ſo all things are for him, or for his glory, as the ultimate end of their exiſtence;—and that they were created, and are preſerved, for his pleaſure; and yet he ſolemnly declares that he has no pleaſure in their death, or ſtate of miſery and diſgrace. Every wiſe potter will act with deſign, and employ his power over his clay to produce what will tend to the honour of his art, and his own pleaſure and benefit. Tho' it ſhould be marred in the making, ſo as not to anſwer the nobler purpoſe, whence it may be caſt aſide for a time; yet does he reſume it, and mould it afreſh for ſome other purpoſe.

The terms honour and diſhonour, as alſo thoſe of love and hatred, are often to be taken, in ſcripture, in a comparative ſenſe, as denoting an inferior degree of honour and of love, and that, not ſo much in regard of God's ultimate intentions reſpecting his creatures, as of ſome preſent external honour or privilege in his providence, or precedence in point of rank or enjoyment. It is evident, from his word, that he has made none, in ſuch a ſenſe, veſſels of diſhonour, as to make it impoſſible for them to become veſſels of honour. "In a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and of ſilver, but alſo of wood and of earth; and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour." The latter veſſels are, in their own place, uſeful and neceſſary in the family, tho' not ſo fit to be exhibited as the other. "If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe, he ſhall be a veſſel unto honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe, and prepared unto every good work," 2 Tim, ii. 20, 21. This plainly ſhews, that a veſſel of diſhonour may be changed into a veſſel of honour, which as plainly proves, that the ſenſe commonly given of the apoſtle's reaſoning, in the 9th of the Romans, cannot be the juſt one. By *wood* in the above paſſage, we may underſtand the doctrines of men, and the traditions of the elders, as alſo, all that religion which conſiſts in the lifeleſs form of godlineſs; and by *earth*, worldly affections, and carnal, ſenſual appetites and paſſions. Both kinds of veſſels are ſaid to be in the great houſe, and belong equally to the family; and the leaſt honourable, inſtead of being bound down to their preſent ſtate, may yet, by a due improvement, riſe to a higher ſtation. Thoſe who make God's foreknowledge of future events, to conſiſt in his ſeeing them in his own predetermination, and their coming to paſs in the ſucceſſive periods of time, the unavoidable conſequence of that predetermination, appear to me to rob him of his preſcience, and make him the author of

ſin. In effecting good he is the prime agent, but with reſpect to the commiſſion of moral evil, foreſeeing how his creatures will act in every caſe, when left to the freedom of their own will, he determines to over-rule their worſt actions, to anſwer the wiſe ends of his providence; and to bind up intelligent beings from ſuch freedom, would be to deſtroy all moral agency and virtue. In my humble opinion, God decrees the wicked actions of men in no other ſenſe; and it is worthy of him, as the ruler of the world, thus to act, which we ſee exemplified in the treatment of Joſeph by his brethren, and of our Lord by the Jews.

Were the diſtinction of men into veſſels of honour, and veſſels of diſhonour, the reſult of any decree of election and reprobration, in proof of which, the 9th of Romans is often referred to, there could be no room for a man purging himſelf from veſſels of the above deſcription, *wood and earth*, and becoming a veſſel of honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe, and prepared unto every good work. If any come into the world under an impoſſibility of attaining ſalvation, the ſame as to be under a neceſſity of being always miſerable, which an irrevocable decree of reprobation muſt import, than there could be no room for the above honourable and happy tranſition. But profeſſors of the above deſcription, theſe wooden and earthen veſſels, who are too common in the church in every age, are the veſſels of diſhonour; and, remaining ſuch, it belongs to God to aſſign them their ſtation. In the houſehold of faith, there are veſſels of different dimenſions and glory; and thoſe who follow not Chriſt now in the regeneration ſhall yet be made veſſels of inferior honour in his great houſe.

In this figure of the power of the potter over the clay, many ſee nothing but wrath and fiery indignation; but the church of old viewed it in a different light, and drew hope from it, when God was provoked to hide his face from them, and to conſume them, becauſe of their iniquities. "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand," Iſa. lxiv. 8. Agreeable to this, the Lord himſelf directs the houſe of Iſrael to the ſame figure, ſhewing, that as when a veſſel was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another veſſel, as ſeemed him good, ſo they were in his hand; the very thing for which the advocates of the reſtoration contend; Jer. xviii. 4, 6. It is impoſſible that God can make any veſſel of diſhonour, as importing ſin, which to aſſert, would be to make him the author of it; and in puniſhing the wicked, he but renders to them according to their deeds. But is it not worthy of him to be the reſtorer of the ſelf-deſtroyed, without exception? Tho' ſinners, by their continued unbelief and diſobedience, under the means of grace, may ſo far mar his work as not to become veſſels of honour, yet it is eaſy with him to recover them to ſome inferior place in his houſe, where there are many manſions. Thus, what is thought to make againſt the reſtoration, is found, upon examination, to afford additional proof of its truth.

Some urge that wicked men grow more obdurate under puniſhment; and that in hell they will be always ſinning, and ſo liable to freſh ſufferings on that account; whence they infer that there can be no reſtoration. Tho' bad men *often grow worſe* under chaſtiſement on earth, yet that is not always ſo, as we

ſee in the caſe of Joſeph's brethren, of Manaſſeh, Nebuchadnezzar, and others. But no compariſon can be drawn between preſent and future puniſhment, except in their ſalutary deſign. In the ſtate to come, every thing will be removed from the ſinner that tends here to prevent the deſired effect of correction; and every circumſtance will concur in his diſmal lot that can give his puniſhment full weight. Add to this, its dread and unknown duration; for horrid deſpair muſt conſtitute an eſſential part of his portion. If earthly parents, by repeating the ſtripes of the rod, can bring their children to their feet; much more will the ſeverity of our heavenly Father's corrections ſubdue at length the moſt refractory of his offspring, Pſal. lxvi. 3. That God employs the rod, as well as the word, to give wiſdom to the fooliſh on earth, does not derogate from the mediation of his Son, or the work of his Spirit; and why ſhould puniſhment in the future ſtate, with a view to humble the ſinner under God's mighty hand, and prepare him for diſcoveries of his love, under the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of the times, be thought to rob Chriſt, or the Holy Spirit, of his due glory? God well knows how to humble and debaſe the moſt haughty, and we are told that he will do it, Iſa. ii. Let haughty mortals hear the confeſſion of the proudeſt brother probably that ever they had on earth; "Thoſe that walk in pride he is able to abaſe," Dan. iv. 37.

That ſinners will continue to ſin while they retain a corrupt nature, and an evil heart of unbelief, muſt be granted; but this does not hinder their obtaining mercy on earth, and why ſhould it be thought to debar them from it beyond the grave? That they will grow more deſperately and daringly wicked in hell, I muſt deny, till I ſee ſcripture proof for it. Dives is the only ſinner in ſuch a ſtate, of whom we have any account in ſcripture, and no ſuch thing can be inferred from that account. That the ſins committed there make the wicked liable to additional ſufferings, as is uſually urged in ſupport of the eternity of their torments, I ſee no reaſon from the word of God to conclude; for there we are told, That as we now ſow, we ſhall hereafter reap, both in kind and degree; and that the wicked ſhall receive according to the deeds done in the body, yea, every one be rewarded at the laſt day according to their works; which entirely cuts off one of theſe arguments which is thought unanſwerable in favour of the endleſs duration of future miſery. But ſuch arguments equally ſtrike againſt the preſent diſpenſation of mercy, and go to bind up the hands of omnipotence, that he cannot do with his own what he pleaſeth. Let us beware of ſuch vain reaſoning.

The ſaying of Solomon, "In the place where the tree falleth there it ſhall be, Eccleſ. xi. 3. is often referred to, and additions made to it, in proof of the never-ceaſing duration of future miſery; but when the paſſage is examined in its connection, nothing appears farther from his thoughts than to eſtabliſh any ſuch doctrine by this ſimile. At the beginning of the chapter, he exhorts us to caſt our bread upon the waters, or rather, our bread-corn on a well watered ſoil, and that we ſhall find it after many days, or at the time of harveſt, with increaſe, as a tree is found in the poſition where it is felled, till ſomehow removed. There is not the leaſt reference, in the whole paſſage, to death or eternity, *and any commentator* that I have conſulted, views it in a quite different light

The context plainly ſhews that the wiſe man applies the ſimile to acts of charity and beneficence, and their future happy effects to thoſe who from right motives perform them. But taking it in the common acceptation, would men allow themſelves to reaſon for a moment, they would ſee that the uſual inference is unnatural and unjuſt. Do trees get leave always to lie among us where they fall? and tho' they ſhou'd, would they not, in courſe of time, waſte and decay? Is not the united effort of men able to remove them? and are they not actually removed, in order to be converted to ſome uſeful purpoſe? Is the human ſoul ſuch a tree, that after death, God himſelf either cannot or will not remove it from the place where it falls to all eternity? He certainly can, and gives reaſon to believe he will, by aſſuring us, he will yet rejoice in all his works, and that all his works ſhall praiſe him; and alſo by exhorting all his works, in all places of his dominions, to bleſs him; which, we have reaſon to think, he never would do, did he determine never to bleſs the far greater part of them, or rather, to curſe them ſo long as he exiſted.

Some think that the apoſtle's awful declaration, Heb. x. 26, 27. and vi. 4, 5, 6. entirely cuts off every proſpect of the reſtitution of the wicked after death: but it appears to me that theſe paſſages refer to a total and final renunciation of the very profeſſion of Chriſtianity, after having the mind enlightened and convinced by its truth, and feeling for ſome time its divine influence. Such reject Chriſt, the only ſacrifice, and muſt periſh under aggravated guilt. But be the ſenſe of theſe paſſages what it may, they only reſpect the preſent diſpenſation, and cannot affect the reſtoration; for what God may do with ſuch characters at length is not ſaid here, but is to be learned from other portions of ſcripture. Tho' they make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience, ſo as to forfeit, beyond recovery, the birth-right, and their heavenly Father's firſt bleſſing; yet, like profane Eſau, they may be brought, at a future period, and by another diſpenſation, to poſſeſs an inferior bleſſing.

It eſcapes me whether I have already adverted to the following objection: If the reſtoration hold, how could the Lord ſwear in his wrath, that the unbelieving Jews, who died in the wilderneſs, ſhould never enter into his reſt? This objection, like many others, entirely proceeds from ignorance of the nature of the reſtoration pleaded for, and from confounding two things diſtinct, ſalvation, or entire exemption from the wrath to come, and recovery from its dominion, after ſo long enduring it. According to the doctrine of the reſtoration, the ſolemn oath of God will be fully and literally executed on all that now continue to deſpiſe the glorious reſt revealed in the goſpel, or that life and immortality which it has brought to light, and to prefer a preſent world to the proſpect of celeſtial bliſs. Such as die in unbelief can have no part in the reſt of faith on earth, the preſent portion of true Chriſtians;—they cannot reſt in their diſembodied ſpirits with Chriſt in paradiſe, during the period between their death and reſurrection;—they will have no part in the firſt reſurrection, nor ſhare, as citizens, in the reſt and honours of the new Jeruſalem, this being the excluſive privilege of the ſaints;—and they ſhall not aſcend with the Meſſiah, *and the church* of the firſt-born, to the higheſt heavens, after the grand

work of univerſal reſtitution or reſtoration is completed, this honour pertaining only to the ſaints of the Moſt High; while the younger ſons of the great houſehold, the prodigals of the far country, have the renovated earth aſſigned them as their portion. Thus ſinners who have ſhewed no mercy, ſhall, as the apoſtle James expreſſes it, receive, at one period, judgment without mercy; and yet, in their very caſe, as he adds, mercy may rejoice againſt, or, as on the margin, glory over judgment, James ii. 13. In the 24th chapter of Iſaiah, near the cloſe, we ſee judgment ending in mercy, and mercy rejoicing, with dove-like wing, over judgment. Tho' ſinners are compared to *tares*, to *barren trees*, and to *briers and thorns*, things periſhable in their own nature, and unable to ſuſtain, without a continued miracle, the unceaſing operation of fire; yet, ſo far as they are the work of God, this is not intended to deſtroy them; for he calls them his threſhing, and the corn of his floor, plainly intimating as much. But mercy will bring up the rear of God's works, and cover them with her impenetrable ſhield from all ſubſequent miſery, ſhewing that he is, what the ſame apoſtle calls him, *very pitiful, and of tender mercy*, James v. 11. What man in his judgment would chuſe to forfeit, for a momentary gratification, all the happineſs included in the above reſt, and at the ſame time incur all the miſery of the ſecond death? So mad a choice muſt produce hereafter the moſt heart-rending anguiſh and remorſe, which poor heathens that have not the goſpel ſhall eſcape. Let ſuch as neglect the preſent ſalvation conſider the fate of the houſe within the walled city that was not redeemed within the year, Lev. xxv. 29, 30.

What our Lord ſaid of Judas, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born," Mat. xxvi. 24. is thought to exclude all hope of reſtoration; for were he to be recovered to happineſs, tho' at ever ſo remote a period, it is pleaded that ſuch a ſaying would not hold. There are many, it is to be feared, who love and practiſe the treaſon, and never give proof of their repentance, who yet affect to hate the traitor with implacable hatred. His crime was great; but it appears to have originated from that love of money which is the root of all evil; and in which he has too many ſucceſſors among profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who never come the length of reſtoring the wages of iniquity. That eminent Hebrew critic, Dr Gill, who is no friend to the reſtoration, obſerves on the above text, that it was a common proverb among the Jews, tho' differently expreſſed, which they applied to perſons who met with great misfortunes, or had been guilty of ſome heinous crime. Mr Pool alſo, in his Synopſis, quotes ſome eminent authors in proof of the ſame. To ſuch a proverb the wiſe man is allowed to refer, Eccl. vi. 4. &c. where he deſcribes the ſtate of a man whom ſome might, perhaps, call proſperous; yet adds, "an untimely birth is better than he." Our Lord does not ſay, It had been good for that man if he had never exiſted, which carries with it a quite different idea, tho' ſeldom adverted to; for many have gone to heaven that never came to the birth.

Judas is ſaid to have repented; and his repentance had every requiſite of true repentance but firm hope in the divine mercy; while ſome that are bitter againſt him, who never ſaw a Judas in their own hearts, nor treaſon in their practice, give no mark of true repentance, except you call a confident, preſumptuous hope,

by that name. I intended to have given you an extract from Dr Hammond, on Mat. xxvii. 5. Acts i. 18. in which he shews, by various quotations from Greek authors, that the verb rendered *hanged*, signifies to be *suffocated*, which he supposes might be *with extreme grief*, with which he thinks Luke's account accords; instances of the bursting of the bowels having occurred in consequence of such a cause. In looking into Pool on these passages, I see he lays considerable stress on the Doctor's opinion, and Henry does not call the truth of it in question.—But allowing the poor man added the crime of suicide to those of treason and covetousness, did all this place him beyond the power of his divine Master to recover him? and I venture to say he is the last man on whom our Lord would visit any thing like personal revenge, of which he is indeed incapable in any case. How mild our Lord's address to him, even when he came to betray him into the hands of his enemies? "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Mat. xxvi. 50.; and how expressive, upon the restoration scheme, of his thoughts of mercy towards him!

I have often wondered of late, that our Lord should wash the feet of Judas, an action which he himself explains as significant of spiritual washing, if he meant that this disciple should always remain under the guilt and dominion of sin and misery, and never be washed from his filthiness. And some maintain that Judas partook of the holy supper; but how our Lord would permit the one, or perform the other, I am at a loss to account for upon the common system. Luke applies to Judas, Acts i. 20. what the Psalmist refers to the unbelieving Jews at large, Psal. lxix. 25. and cix. 8. "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishoprick let another take." Some render this, let his mansion be vacant, and let none inhabit it; but let another take his charge or occupy his office. If the Jews, to whom these things, in the first instance, apply, are to be restored, or all saved, when the Deliverer comes out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob; why should any presume to exclude one of that people from mercy to all eternity, who is said, before his death, to have repented, and gave back the wages of iniquity, with a public confession of his guilt, and an honourable testimony to his Master's character in his mouth, "saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!" Mat. xxvii. 4.

Judas appears to have been present with the other disciples, when their common Master addressed them in the following words: "When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Mat. xix. 28. The period referred to may intend the millennium, or the New Jerusalem state, during the ages of ages, or both. Judas is called "the son of perdition," or destruction, and his fate even on earth justifies the expression, John xvii. 12. But allowing it imports future misery also, the degree and extent of which none can tell, even that does not hinder our Lord from fulfilling his word, pledged above, even to him. Antichrist is called by the same name, 2 Thes. ii. 3. and yet the period of his torment is *marked* by the revolution of day and night, Rev. xiv. 11. & xx. 10. Professors *should remember* that this will be the fate also of those who worship the

image of the beaſt, and receive the mark of his name, whether on their forehead, or covertly in their right hand; which may include many that think they ſtand moſt remote from the danger. Tho' many ſcruple not to doom poor Judas to the worſt place in hell, and that to all eternity, yet Luke ſpeaks of his mournful exit with more caution, and ſo ſets us an example how we are to ſpeak of the deceaſed, of whom we cannot entertain good hope;—"miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own place," Acts i. 25. Upon the whole I ſee nothing in Judas's caſe, criminal, mournful, and affecting as it is, to militate againſt the reſtoration; and would many of thoſe who urge it for that purpoſe, and give looſe reins to their invective againſt that unhappy apoſtle, ſearch their own hearts to learn how far the love of the world predominates in them, and how much they too are chargeable with betraying, and crucifying the Lord that bought them, they would give more proof of their Chriſtian ſpirit, than by ſuch conduct. Let us judge not that we be not judged. Did men duly reflect where God finds all on whom he ſhews mercy, even where he found Abraham and his fathers of old, when he called him to his knowledge and ſervice, ſerving falſe gods, Joſh. xxiv. 2. they would ſpare much of their reaſoning againſt the univerſal doctrine, drawn from the guilt of Judas, the ſtate of the damned, &c. Let thoſe who are Chriſtians indeed recollect who made them to differ, and what valuable thing they poſſeſs, they did not receive. In God's ſight, his guilty creatures are ſelf-deſtroyed; but is it not worthy of him to ſay even to ſuch, In me is your help to be found? Little reaſon have the beſt to be proud of the rock whence they were hewn, and of the hole of the pit whence they were digged. Is there any rock ſo hard from which God cannot hew a ſinner? or any pit ſo deep out of which his arm cannot dig and ſave him? Let profeſſors remember, that out of the ſtones God can raiſe up ſeed to Abraham, who ſhall do him more honour than many of them have done.

Some urge the caſe of Dives, recorded Luke 16th, as an inſurmountable obſtacle to the reſtoration. Here, ſay they, is an impaſſible gulf, fixed between the region of the miſerable and that of the bleſſed, whence all hope of the recovery of the former muſt be for ever excluded. This appears very plauſible and ſtrong at firſt view. Among other important ends which this parabolical repreſentation ſerves, our Lord might have had in view to correct a falſe and very dangerous opinion, which prevailed among the Jews. While that people ſcrupled not to doom all the reſt of mankind to hell, like too many of their Chriſtian brethren, like them, too, they monopolized the grace or favour of God to themſelves, and maintained that none of Abraham's ſeed would be miſerable in the next world. Here our Lord preſents a ſon of Abraham to them in a future ſtate of miſery, without any hope of deliverance. But among the various uſes of this repreſentation, to inculcate the eternity of future miſery ſeems o be no part of its deſign.

At the period referred to, the region in which Dives is ſuppoſed to be ſeen, was a priſon, reſembling a ſtrongly fortified city or garriſon; but if the great gulf or moat that ſurrounded it could be paſſed over, it would ceaſe

to be a priſon, which it was deſtined to be for unknown ages thereafter. To talk of Abraham comforting him with the proſpect of reſtoration in future, if ſuch a thing was to take place, and of his ſilence on that head amounting to a denial of the fact, is ridiculous, and of a piece with the futile reaſoning of many on the ſubject. Dread deſpair will conſtitute an eſſential part of future miſery, which nothing can remove but an explicit declaration of God's merciful intention to its wretched ſubjects; but the times and ſeaſons of making ſuch declaration he has put in his own power, whence it cannot be anticipated. We find the apoſtles occaſionally forbidden to preach the goſpel in certain places, tho' theſe were to be afterwards viſited with that bleſſing,; but the time was not yet come. The father of the faithful would not anticipate a meſſage he had no commiſſion to deliver; but his ſilence reſpecting the reſtitution of all things concludes no more againſt it, than the prohibition of the apoſtles by the Holy Spirit to preach the goſpel, in certain diſtricts, can be viewed as a proof that God had determined the people of theſe diſtricts ſhould be deprived of all benefit in future from that diſpenſation of mercy and love. The Lord hath fixed a time for every purpoſe, and at the end it will ſpeak and not lie. But in a ſtrict ſenſe the impaſſible gulf between the righteous and the wicked ſhall remain; for the reſtoration does not recover the wicked to a place in the New Jeruſalem as citizens, this being the excluſive privilege of the righteous, or church of the firſt-born.

Abraham calls Dives ſon, not ſurely to inſult him in his miſery, but to ſhew that he owned the relation, as God who ſpake by him alſo does, felt for him as a father for a ſon in diſtreſs, and perhaps to convey, if not to him, at leaſt to us, a hint that mercy was intended for him and ſuch in future as a child of Abraham, who is the father of the faithful, even of all that ſhall be recovered at any period to the divine favour. This very reaſon our Lord aſſigns for curing a poor woman on the Sabbath day: "And ought not this woman, being a *daughter of Abraham*, whom Satan hath bound, lo, theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" Luke xiii. 16. That this relation extends to mankind in general, appears to me evident from Heb. ii. 16. "For verily he taketh not hold of angels, but of the ſeed of Abraham he taketh hold;" margin. In aſſuming human nature, by which he, as our neareſt of kin, eſpouſed it to himſelf, our Lord took hold of the ſeed of Abraham. Now this extends to all mankind, whoſe Lord and repreſentative Meſſiah is; and the reaſon he aſſigns applies equally to them all, ſo that theſe ſons and daughters of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, if not previouſly looſed, ſhall be ſet free at the grand Sabbath or Jubilee of the univerſe; and tho' many will not admit this, our Lord owns himſelf under an obligation to accompliſh it. In this view it deſerves, notice, that all the nations, kindreds, and families of the earth, that were to be bleſſed in Meſſiah, are alſo ſaid to be bleſſed in or with Abraham; for, by the reſtoration, they will all, in due time, become his children, when, like him, made faithful and obedient to the word of truth. How elſe can the birth of Meſſiah be matter of good tidings of great joy to *all* people? Thus we *ſee how the Lord* will yet raiſe up all that are bowed down, and uphold all that

fall, by recovering even the younger branches of his family to the honour and happineſs forfeited by the firſt tranſgreſſion. Thus will he reſtore what he took not away, or was loſt by ſin. The promiſe to the patriarch, "In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed," Paul counted preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles, Gal. iii. 8, 16. But ſhould any now preach the ſalvation of all nations, even all the nations that derive their exiſtence from God, unleſs in the very limited and qualified ſenſe human wiſdom is pleaſed to preſcribe, the maſters and zealots in Iſrael will at once pronounce them heretics. But times are changed ſince the days of the apoſtles. and Chriſtians are changed with them. That all nations will be bleſſed in Meſſiah, and yet whole nations be miſerable to all eternity in hell, is a myſtery which, I think, will puzzle the wiſdom of churchmen to ſolve. But I have ſomething farther to ſuggeſt before I diſmiſs this article.

The endearing appellation of Son, given by the Patriarch to Dives, may ſerve to correct a too common and groſs miſtake, That we have no concern at all with the damned—that their ſtate of miſery diſſolves every preceding tie which might attach us to them, whence we ſhould give ourſelves no trouble about their ſtate of woe, whether limited, or endleſs; for if we are the children of faithful Abraham, every Dives in that ſtate is ſtill our brother, and as ſuch entitled to our love of compaſſion. But few inherit that patriarch's faith, and many renounce all connection with him as their father, by denying any relation to thoſe whom he calls his ſons, and refuſing them the leaſt brotherly ſympathy. Deſpair will conſtitute part of the portion of the wicked's cup. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. None can poſſeſs that faith till they have acceſs to hear that word; whence the wretched ſons of woe can have no hope of the reſtoration, till they are brought to hear and believe the goſpel; or, if they expect any ſuch thing, hope ſo long deferred muſt make the heart ſick indeed.

It is denied that compaſſion for his ſurviving brethren had any ſhare in his wiſhing Lazarus might be ſent to warn them of their danger, that they might not come into that place of torment; but is there any thing in the whole repreſentation that can juſtify ſuch denial, or our pronouncing on what paſſes in the receſſes of the human heart, which God alone can ſearch?

Thoſe who repreſent the wicked in a future ſtate as eternally curſing and blaſpheming their Maker, find nothing in the conduct of Dives to juſtify ſo wild a notion. He takes his repeated repulſes with patience, and after the denial of his almoſt no requeſt, inſtead of upbraiding Abraham, he ſtill calls him father. Muſt not his pride have been greatly mortified before he could aſk ſo ſmall a favour as a drop of water, and that by the finger of Lazarus, who lately lay a poor deſpiſed beggar at his gates? But in this, as in many other things, the common doctrine and its abettors, degrade the Creator, God bleſſed for evermore, not merely to a level with the creature, thinking him ſuch an one as themſelves, but alſo beneath frail man. Few have the hardineſs to curſe the judge who pronounces ſentence of death upon them, even to his face. Does not the courage of the boldeſt villains often fail at the ſight of the fatal tree, where they are to ſuffer for their crimes? and yet what are theſe things compared to the judgment of the great day, and the torment of the great furnace of fire? But on reſ

gious ſubjects ſeldom do men derive their notions from the word of truth, or ſuffer the dictates of common ſenſe to ſpeak. Nay, it is well if they do not ſpurn at that word, when brought to their ears, if it happen to contradict what they had been taught and accuſtomed to believe, as ſanctioned by the deciſion of the ſcribes and elders. But Chriſtians are redeemed from their vain converſation, received by tradition from their fathers, 1 Pet. i. 18. and thoſe who tenaciouſly hold ſuch tradition, in the face of ſcripture evidence, give little proof of their intereſt in that redemption. But to proceed to another objection.

It is objected, That the doctrine of the reſtoration takes away the force of our Lord's weighty ſaying, "What ſhall it profit a man if he ſhould gain the whole world, and *loſe his own ſoul?* Mat. xvi. 26. Mark viii. 36. Luke ix. 25. It is believed that this muſt imply never-ceaſing miſery; and ſo I myſelf thought, till I examined the force of the original, and the uſe of the phraſe elſewhere. In the two literal Latin verſions of that eminent reformer Beza, who was Calvin's colleague, I find the Greek verb rendered *amerced, mulcted,* or *fined, injured,* or *hurt,* and the paſſage tranſlated thus, "What ſhall it profit a man if he ſhould gain the whole world, and have *his ſoul fined?*" Does not this convey a quite different idea from its total and unceaſing deſtruction? In one of the verſions he has it, *to ſuffer detriment or loſs in his ſoul,* which may be awfully ſerious and irrepairable, tho' it amount not to what is uſually underſtood to be the import of the expreſſion.

Montanus, in his interlinear verſion, renders the term, in the different places where it occurs, both in the text and on the margin, by the very ſame words; and Parkhurſt, in his lexicon, renders it in the paſſive voice, which our Lord uſes, to be *endangered,* to *ſuffer* or *receive harm, damage,* or *loſs,* to be *ſubjected to a fine.* The real import of the ſubſtantive, from which the verb is derived, may be ſeen, by conſulting Acts xxvii, 10, 21. Phil. iii. 7, 8. and of the verb itſelf, 1 Cor. iii. 15. 2 Cor. vii. 9. Phil. iii. 8. In ſome of theſe paſſages it is connected with ſalvation, and ſerves to explain the words of Paul, on the reſtoration ſcheme, which have puzzled many to reconcile to the common ſyſtem; "If any man's work ſhall be burned he ſhall *ſuffer loſs;* but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire," 1 Cor. iii. 15. All the chaff, wood, hay, and ſtubble, of which many are ſo fond, and by which the ſtrength and beauty of the ſpiritual temple are greatly impaired, ſhall be all burnt up, to the ſerious damage of thoſe who have dealt in ſuch ware.

The Engliſh word damnation is derived from a Latin one that literally ſignifies *ſuffering loſs,* its root being *damnum, loſs, damage,* ſuch as that which is ſuſtained, by throwing heavy or cumberſome articles out of a veſſel in time of a ſtorm, or of that which is ſuffered by ſhipwreck, or fire, from which, tho' men eſcape, yet not without great injury. Condemnation, which is derived from the Latin verb *damno,* to *damn,* and more immediately from *condemno* to *condemn,* denotes a ſubjecting, by legal ſentence, to ſuffer loſs, damage, or harm, without ſpecifying to what extent. Thus we ſee how a man may ſuffer loſs, or be damned, and yet ſaved or reſtored, ſo as by fire; and that a man may loſe his *ſoul, or have his ſoul fined,* or ſubjected to a moſt ſerious penalty, the effects of

which ſhall remain in the forfeiture of what cannot be recovered, and which includes impriſonment till a legal releaſe is procured; and yet that man may thereafter attain ſome comfortable ſubſiſtence, tho' nothing like what he had before in his poſſeſſion or power. Is the avoiding of ſuch a ſerious and irreparable loſs not worthy of the moſt anxious care?

What our Lord has ſaid of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is thought by many quite concluſive againſt the reſtoration. But I hope the examination of the ſacred text will ſhew, that it warrants no ſuch concluſion. In the goſpel of Matthew, xii. 31, 32. we have it, "Wherefore I ſay unto you, all manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men; but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men;" that is, as appears from the laſt clauſe of the next verſe, under the preſent diſpenſation;—"Whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in *this world*, neither in the *world to come*." In the Greek it is, *neither in this age, nor in that to come*. The coming age was a common phraſe among the Jews, to denote the Meſſiah's reign, or the diſpenſation of the goſpel, as contraſted with that of Moſes, or of the law. Hence commentators expound it, That there was no pardon for this ſin, either under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, which exiſted when our Lord ſpoke theſe words, or under the Chriſtian, which was to ſucceed it. Some of the Chriſtian fathers viewed the world to come as denoting the intermediate ſtate between death and the reſurrection; and that the ſenſe is, that thoſe who committed this ſin would certainly be ſubjected to the ſecond death. Dr Chauncey, in his treatiſe on the reſtoration, views the declaration in the different Evangeliſts, that all ſins, and all manner of ſin, would be forgiven, as importing that they would be pardonable under the preſent diſpenſation of mercy; and that the ſin againſt the Holy Spirit, on the contrary, is unpardonable in the preſent ſtate.

But to me, the text itſelf affords the plaineſt and eaſieſt ſolution. There it is aſſerted, in the plaineſt terms, that *all* manner of ſin and blaſphemy, or, as in the Greek, *every ſin and blaſphemy*, or railing, *ſhall be forgiven unto men*. Here is an univerſal amneſty, the pardon of all ſin, without any exception; and conſequently, of the ſin againſt the Holy Spirit. Our Lord pledged his word to his diſciples for it, and he well knew the import and extent of what he ſaid. What he added reſpecting that ſin, is therefore not to be viewed as an exception from a general rule, but only as pointing out a peculiarity of it, that it could receive no remiſſion before the day of judgment, but that it would infallibly ſubject the perſon who committed it to the puniſhment of the ſecond death.

Mark has it, "Verily I ſay unto you, all ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme; but he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath *never* forgiveneſs, (or not to the age) but is in danger of eternal damnation," chap. iii. 28, 29. Here the rendering, *all ſins and blaſphemies*, perfectly agrees with the original, and our Lord, a ſecond time, gives an abſolute declaration, prefixed with, "Verily I ſay unto you," that all ſins and blaſphemies ſhall be forgiven. In this paſſage, the pardon of the ſin againſt the Holy Spirit will appear

to an Engliſh reader entirely cut off, by the ſtrong expreſſion, *hath never forgivenneſs*. But every one that knows the original muſt ſee that it conveys no ſuch ſentiment, if properly conſtrued. In our verſion the negative particle *not* is ſeparated from the verb with which, in proper conſtruction, it ſhould be connected, and joined to the word *aion, age, diſpenſation*, and thus *never* is produced. By this liberty, a noun which conveys always the idea of duration, and is applied to periods that have come long ſince to an end, loſes its proper form and import, and inſtead of denoting any portion of duration, becomes an adverb of mere negation. Thus, as in other places, the form as well as the ſenſe of the language of the Spirit is changed, and a well known rule of the Greek tongue tranſgreſſed, which requires adverbs or particles to be conſtrued with verbs, inſtead of connecting them with nouns. But admiting the conſtruction in our verſion, inſtead of making *never*, it ſhould be, *not to the age*, or *diſpenſation*. The ſentence, in its natural order, literally runs, "But whoſoever blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath not forgivenneſs *to the age*;" or tranſpoſing the negative particle, as in our verſion, "Whoſoever ſpeaketh injuriouſly of the Holy Spirit, hath remiſſion *not to the age* or *diſpenſation*; namely, the grand age or period of the ſpiritual Jubilee, of which the Jewiſh one was but a ſhadow, as then *the* bleſſed *diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times*, mentioned by Paul, ſhall commence.

But reading the text even as it ſtands in our Engliſh verſion, the uſe of the word *never* elſewhere in ſcripture, juſtifies us in ſaying, that it cannot here prove that the ſin againſt the Holy Spirit ſhall not be forgiven to all eternity. "Thus ſaith the Lord, David ſhall *never* want a man to ſit upon the throne of the houſe of Iſrael," Jer. xxxiii. 17.—"The fire ſhall ever be burning upon the altar; it ſhall *never* go out," Lev. vi. 13. The ſacred fire has long ſince ceaſed to burn on the altar; and David has not had a man to ſit upon the throne of the houſe of Iſrael for many ages.

Here we have alſo a ſolemn declaration of our Lord, that all ſin ſhall be forgiven, and the period when this particular ſin of blaſphemy ſhall be remitted, plainly marked out.—The term rendered *damnation*, is often in the New Teſtament tranſlated *judgment*, which includes the trial, the paſſing ſentence, and the execution of it; which laſt it means here. The *eternal* in the Greek, *aionion judgment*, denotes that awful puniſhment of the ſecond death, to which thoſe who are not found in the Lamb's book of life at the day of judgment, ſhall be ſubjected. In our verſion, the clauſe is too faintly rendered; "but is in danger of eternal damnation;" for a man may eſcape what he is in danger of: but ſuch as commit the ſin in queſtion cannot eſcape the judgment of hell. Much has been written about the nature of that ſin; but the reaſon our Lord aſſigns ſeems to point it out; "Becauſe they ſaid, He hath an unclean ſpirit," ver. 30.

Luke expreſſes it more conciſely, yet ſo as to include the extent of the Divine amneſty.—"Whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him; but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt it ſhall not be forgiven;" that is, as the other evangeliſts lead us to underſtand it, *under this diſpenſation*, or, to the age, or times when the reſtitution of all things

ſhall commence.—From this review of the three paſſages in the goſpels, where the ſin againſt the Holy Spirit is ſpoken of, it will appear, that they contain nothing againſt the reſtoration, but rather a plain and poſitive declaration that all and every ſin ſhall be yet forgiven, and the particular ſin ſpecified at a certain given period, known to the Lord in its commencement and duration. Let his own word ſpeak for itſelf, and be heard.

When I began to reply to objections, I little apprehended the taſk would grow ſo much upon my hand. But the threatenings which import future miſery are eaſily recollected, while the uſe of the language in which they are conveyed, in other parts of ſcripture, and the promiſes and predictions which give reaſon to expect a total renovation of all intelligences, are either not attended to, or miſunderſtood.—Many urge that the doctrine of the reſtoration leads to licentiouſneſs, and takes away from the motives to repentance and holineſs; and therefore ought to be reprobated and oppoſed. This objection had long weight with myſelf, but it was before I had examined the ſcripture evidence of the ſubject. Did the doctrine go to deny all future puniſhment, there would be room for this objection; but when this is ſo far from being the caſe, that it maintains that the degree and duration of future miſery will be commenſurate to the guilt here contracted, if repentance now prevent not; where is the ground for ſuch an accuſation? But does not iniquity abound even where the doctrine of eternal torments makes a conſiderable part of the diſcourſes delivered? Do not many ſhelter themſelves from all its thunder under refuges of lies? Is the government of our Redeemer a reign of terror, that the doctrine of endleſs miſery is thought ſo neceſſary to keep the world in awe, and to promote the ends of Chriſtianity in the earth? If ſo, how comes it to paſs, that in all the account we have of the labours of the apoſtles, in the book of Acts, and in the epiſtles, a ſubject ſo important ſhould be ſo ſparingly touched, and by ſome of the penmen of ſcripture ſcarce mentioned, while none of them urge the unceaſing duration of future miſery as a motive to faith and repentance? We are told that he who cometh to God, muſt believe that he is the rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him—that there is mercy with him that he may be feared—that they who know his name will put their truſt in him—and that his name and memorial in every age is, "The Lord merciful and gracious," &c. But not a word do we read in all the Bible of the neceſſity of believing the never-ending miſery of the wicked, in order to our own ſalvation; tho' many lay ſuch a mighty ſtreſs on that article, that they impiouſly preſume to call that perſon no Chriſtian, who does not believe it. But this is not the only article in which ancient and modern Chriſtianity differs; but the true and faithful ſayings of Jeſus are often overlooked, or deſpiſed, and the ſpurious dictates of human wiſdom foiſted in their ſtead, as canonized goſpel.

He that will not fear God from the dread of limited puniſhment, will not fear him tho' you ſhould hold it forth as eternal, for this plain reaſon; becauſe he does not practically believe either. What is that holineſs which mere terror produces, and on which ſo many profeſſors lay a mighty ſtreſs? The devils believe and tremble; but are they holy? Have the threatenings of God no terrors

unleſs you make their effects eternal? So many ſeem to think, and indeed, preſume to expreſs the atheiſtical thought, tho' at the expence of blaſpheming their Maker. They talk at ſuch a rate, that you would think they fancy themſelves heroic enough to ſtand the brunt of all his terrors for ages *; and yet a ſingle ſhock of an earthquake would make thoſe heroes ſhrink into cowards. Is it thus they honour their Father in heaven?—It will ſurely be granted, that that which moſt effectually promotes holineſs, muſt prove the moſt powerful reſtraint upon ſin. Now love is the fulfilling of the law, and we love him, ſaid an apoſtle, becauſe he firſt loved us. It has paſſed into a proverb, That love begets love; and the love of God and our neighbour, is the eſſence of all true religion. That doctrine then which repreſents the Deity in the moſt amiable light, and his love as extending to all his creatures, is certainly moſt calculated to conciliate the human mind, to ſubdue and reconcile the heart of man; and conſequently, to promote holineſs. Like cauſes produce like effects.

The juſtice of the above remarks admitted, (and it will be difficult to diſprove them,) the charge of licentiouſneſs may be retorted on the common doctrine. To repreſent God as loving only a few of his intelligent, guilty offspring, and as ordaining and dooming all the reſt to inevitable and never-ending deſtruction, is the moſt effectual way to adminiſter fuel to licentiouſneſs or deſpair. Will intreaties, prayers or tears alter the decrees of heaven? may the ſinner ſay. If I am not elected, let me do what I will I cannot be ſaved; and if I am elected, I will certainly be ſometime or other called, and at length ſaved, and the greater my ſins, the more glory will divine grace and mercy have in ſaving me. Has the common doctrine no tendency to produce ſuch reaſonings in the corrupt heart of man? Does it not often produce them? If not above one in a thouſand of the human race, or, as ſome tell us, not above one in ten thouſand, are ordained to obtain ſalvation, what reaſon have I to think, may the poor awakened ſinner ſay, that I am that highly favoured perſon?

Moſes, in his ſolemn addreſs to God, hath this important queſtion, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" Pſal. xc. 11. That man of God had acceſs to ſee many dread effects of his anger, more than any in the preſent age ever ſaw. Yet many ſeem to think they know ſo much of its power as to ſee nothing in it worth heeding, if it be not eternally exerted. Ah! fooliſh people and unwiſe!—They that know God will talk after another ſort. It is evident to a demonſtration, that many of the greateſt bigots for the doctrine of eternal miſery, do not in fact believe their own doctrine; elſe they muſt be groſsly partial to themſelves, and callous to every humane feeling. They profeſs to believe, that every one who does not yet poſſeſs that holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee

* It is ſurpriſing to hear how ſome talk of every degree of future miſery that may not be properly eternal. The wrath of an earthly king is as the roaring of a lion, which makes the beaſts within its reach to quake; but they ſeem to think that he is not worthy to be feared, for caſting ſoul and body into hell for even a million of years or ages, unleſs kept there without end! Is not this deſpiſing the chaſtening of the Lord! Such atheiſtical things are thrown out often in converſation, but it is ſtill more ſurpriſing to ſee them publiſhed from the preſs, and that by ſome of God's profeſſed ſervants! Is there any thing in ſcripture to countenance ſuch impious reflections? *Let ſuch tremble* leſt God ſhould leave them to make the experiment.

the Lord, is every moment in danger of never ending torment; and yet they can indulge themſelves in worldly cares, pleaſures and purſuits, while ſtrangers to that holineſs; and remain unconcerned, while their neareſt relations are expoſed to the ſame deſtruction! But conſcience finds a ſubterfuge, perhaps in the very doctrine of endleſs punihment; for they fancy, poſſibly, they are of the number of thoſe who ſhall eſcape it; and think every man expoſed to it but themſelves. It is amazing with what apathy ſome can talk of the inconceivable and eternal torments of countleſs millions of fellow-creatures; as if they carried in their boſom the heart of devils and not of men. But their doctrine leads to this; for while they believe their Maker hates the work of his hands, and will continue to hate it with a perfect hatred to all eternity, they think it lawful in them, or even meritorious, to anticipate the extreme and endleſs miſery of the wicked, and that with little or no emotion.—Do we ſee it holding univerſally among men, that the more children are perſuaded of the affection of a kind parent, the more they deſpiſe his authority, and rebel againſt his commands? Corrupt as human nature is, this is ſeldom the caſe, eſpecially when the expreſſions of love are directed by wiſdom. Is our heavenly Father then, the only Father whoſe goodneſs muſt be concealed, leſt his offspring ſhould abuſe it? Is unbounded goodneſs, in him, conducted by infinite wiſdom; and yet hath it ſuch a tendency? How long will men "not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

There are ſome who admit the truth, or probability of the Univerſal doctrine, who yet object, Why trouble Chriſtians with it? Have not many gone to glory that believed the oppoſite doctrine? what good purpoſe can it ſerve to write or preach upon it? With ſome reply to ſuch, I will conclude this epiſtle, and all that I mean to ſay in anſwer to objections. Thus to argue would be to reflect on the divine wiſdom, as if God had revealed ſome things, the knowledge of which ſerved no valuable purpoſe to mankind. If it is not only conſiſtent with reaſon, that he who is the firſt cauſe of all, ſhould ſeek the honour and happineſs of all his works, according to their nature, but alſo countenanced by divine revelation; then can it be culpable to declare it? or a duty to conceal it? If none of God's lapſed creatures have greater claim to his favour than another, what reaſon can be urged for his ſeeking the happineſs of ſome, that will not equally conclude for his ſeeking the happineſs of all, if that ſeem good in his ſight? Admitting the ſaints acquire ſuperior claim, upon the goſpel revelation, will no leſs diſproportion ſatisfy, than the endleſs extremes of bliſs and woe? Do we honour the greateſt and beſt of fathers, by ſuppoſing he will make a diſtinction ſo very material between his offspring to all eternity, and employing ſuch pains to make his word ſpeak a doctrine ſo abhorrent from his paternal character?

Does God ſay that all ſouls are his, and that he is no reſpecter of perſons; and is it a crime to ſay, that he will provide for his own, in a way worthy of himſelf, for thoſe who form part of his great houſehold? How ſhould we be commanded to give God the glory of all his works, if it may be a duty to con-

ceal ſome of theſe from our fellow-creatures, when diſcovered? Is there any work of his, that is not calculated to bring glory to himſelf, and afford ground of praiſe to his people? To hear a profeſſed Chriſtian ſay, allowing the doctrine to be true, What does it concern me whether God will reſtore the wicked or not? let me only ſecure my own ſalvation, is truly aſtoniſhing. Is attention to God's revealed will, and to what will greatly glorify him, as well as benefit millions of fellow-creatures, inconſiſtent with attention to our own ſalvation? If the repentance of a ſinner now produces joy in heaven, will it grieve the ſaints, that God ſhould at length recover the reſt of his intelligent creatures, from a ſtate of ſin and miſery, to one of holineſs and happineſs? Thoſe that do not wiſh the total extinction of ſin, or the entire deſtruction of the works of the devil, in others, as well as in themſelves, cannot be ſaid properly to hate theſe.

To tells us, That we cannot better the ſtate of the dead, by any thing we can diſcover in ſcripture reſpecting them; and that the doctrine of the reſtoration cannot profit, but may hurt, the living, is ſaying nothing at all to the purpoſe, but rather, aſſerting a falſehood. Are we not bound to believe whatever God ſpeaks? and is not all ſcripture profitable for inſtruction, &c. in righteouſneſs? The words of Cornelius imply the mutual duty of preachers and hearers, "We are all here preſent before God, to hear *all things* that are commanded thee of God." Tho' we cannot alter the ſtate of thoſe who are already dead, yet, by declaring the truth, and exhibiting the divine character in its own native light, we may benefit the living. We are forbidden to do evil that good may come; and is it not an evil, to be puniſhed by the Judge of all the earth, to walk in craftineſs, and handle the word of God deceitfully? Muſt not this be done, if we conceal, or diſguiſe, what we believe he has revealed in any portion of his word, for fear of giving offence to men? It is ſuch conduct that conſtitutes a man an heretic, one who is ſo ſubverted, and ſinneth, that he is condemned of himſelf, Tit. iii. 11. Every truth of God is good, and will do good to men, if cordially received in faith and love. "Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Mic. ii. 7. To acknowledge the ſcripture evidence of the doctrine of the reſtoration, and yet deny the good effects of preaching it, is to give the negative to the above queſtion, and charge God with folly, as having deviſed a ſcheme, the knowledge of part of which may do hurt, but can produce no good effects. Let men beware of ſuch carnal reaſoning; for it draws after it a train of conſequences which they ſeem not to foreſee, elſe natural conſcience itſelf would recoil at them. Thoſe who admit that the doctrine is founded in ſcripture, and yet cannot bear to hear it diſcourſed of in public, becauſe many are not diſpoſed to receive it, would do well to conſider our Lord's words, "My ſheep hear my voice—they that are of God will hear God's words." If ſuch a reaſon can juſtify ſilence, then our Lord and his apoſtles, yea, all the miniſters of truth in every age, were highly to blame for openly declaring it; for many always exiſted who were not diſpoſed to receive it. We are commanded to contend earneſtly, tho' not intemperately, for the faith once delivered to the ſaints; and that in all its parts, ſo far as God is pleaſed to diſcover it to us; and wo *ſhall be to us if* we thus believe and preach not the goſpel. Paul gave this to

the elders at Epheſus, as the reaſon why he was pure from the blood of all men; "For I have not ſhunned to declare unto you *all* the counſel of God," Acts xx. 27. It is characteriſtic of a Chriſtian to be pleaſed with what pleaſes God, and to have no ſeparate will.

It is readily granted, that many great and good men have gone to heaven, who have not ſeen the doctrine of the reſtoration to be ſcriptural, and who, perhaps, both preached and wrote againſt it. But had they ſeen it to be true, would they have been conſiſtent in ſo doing? That they did not ſee its truth, is no concluſive argument againſt it; for they ſaw the truth only in part, and prophecied only in part. The beſt of them had their chaff as well as their wheat; and we are not called to follow them any farther than they followed Chriſt. We have a more ſure word of prophecy than their teſtimony, to which we do well to give heed. We are called, in this reſpect, to ceaſe from man, even the beſt of men; and to call no man on earth maſter, or authorative teacher, which is the province of Chriſt alone; for how can men believe the truth of God, who receive ſuch honour one of another? But the time is not yet come, when they ſhall be no more thus taught one of another, but be all taught of God, as it is promiſed in the prophets.

To one who is convinced that the received doctrine is an error, and an error of great magnitude, which throws a deadly ſhade around the ways of God, and groſsly ſlanders his character and adminiſtration, muſt it not appear of importance to vindicate theſe, and place them in a ſcriptural light? Having acceſs to know that doctrine has proved a ſtumbling-block to many, by which they have ſtumbled at the word of truth, and denied the only Lord that bought them, can we be pure from the blood of all men, ſhould we neglect to remove that ſtumbling-block, that ſuch may be reclaimed to the acknowledging of the truth, or, periſhing in their error, left inexcuſable; and that others may be preſerved from the fatal ſnare.—The different and oppoſite ſenſes which Chriſtians affix to ſcripture, furniſh Deiſts with a pretext for rejecting the whole; but they ſhould have the good ſenſe to think, and the candour to admit, that the religion of Chriſtians, and Chriſtianity itſelf, may not, in many reſpects, be the ſame; whence there is no fair arguing from the former againſt the latter. Is it not of conſequence to remove the occaſion of many a ſcruple and perplexing thought to pious Chriſtians, reſpecting their own intereſt in the divine love, and the ſtate of mankind at large; and the ſource which has often furniſhed Satan with poiſon to his pointed darts? Have we not been ſometimes at a loſs to anſwer the too well founded objections of Deiſts againſt the mutilated view commonly given of the divine adminiſtration, and inſtead of being able to give a rational reply, have been obliged to reſolve all into what we ſuppoſed to be the will of Deity?—Can it then be denied, that they ſerve the intereſt of mankind and of holineſs, who remove the formidable obſtacles, which have driven myriads from the very gates of the temple of mercy, to ſeek eaſe to their wounded ſpirits in the boſom of the world that lieth in wickedneſs; deſpairing of finding themſelves included in the little flock, to whom alone the attainment of ſalvation is repreſented as poſſible? Do they not perform an eſſential ſervice to Chriſtianity, who place it in ſuch a light as

claims, and is calculated to conciliate the love of all men, by repreſenting God as having firſt loved them, as willing their recovery and happineſs, and ſending his Son to give himſelf a ranſom for them all? If theſe things are conduſive to the glory of God, and the happineſs of men, the doctrine of the reſtoration muſt be ſo alſo; and it ſhould be proved that they are not, before any preſume to brand that doctrine from their infallible chair, as of infernal origin.—But theſe are not all the noble purpoſes it ſerves.

The univerſal doctrine harmonizes the word and works of God, and ſhews that as all things are good as they came from him as Creator, ſo they ſhall be all good as reſtored to him as their great and ultimate end. God having firſt deſtined man to happineſs, his power will accompliſh what his wiſdom deviſed, and his will purpoſed. It contains the ſtrongeſt motives to univerſal holineſs; and is an antidote againſt thoſe hard thoughts of God, which are too natural to the depraved heart of man, by which he is accounted an auſtere maſter, and a partial unfeeling father. So far as rational fear may be conducive to this, it exhibits what is ſufficient to awake and maintain it. But love being the more powerful, permanent, and perſuaſive principle, in the view it gives of the divine adminiſtration, this predominates. Both principles find a more ample ſcope, and exert a more rational influence upon this, than on the oppoſite opinion, as might be eaſily proved. What can induce us more effectually to love God than a perſuaſion, founded on his word, that he firſt loved us? And what argument more forcible to induce us to love our fellow men, than the belief that God loves them all, gave his Son to the death for them, and intends to make them all in the iſſue happy? Thus we can view every human being as a brother, who ſhall yet be brought to love and ſerve his Maker in common with ourſelves. What a motive this to love all men, to be ready to do them good as we have opportunity, and forgive the injuries we ſuſtain from them? But the man who believes that God will never forgive millions of his own enemies, that he hates them with a perfect hatred, and will purſue them with relentleſs wrath, can never have the ſame motives to the exerciſe of ſuch Chriſtian virtues. Can it be his duty, will he think, to love all men, and to forgive all injuries, while he believes God himſelf loves very few, and will forgive as few of his guilty creatures? What liberty and conſiſtency does the doctrine of God's univerſal love give to our exhortations to fellow men, to come and participate the bleſſings of the goſpel of peace? Inſtead of leading to fear that our labours of love will not only enhance the guilt of many for whoſe good they are intended, which will be the caſe with thoſe who reject the truth, but alſo aggravate their eternal miſery; how joyful to reflect, that the ſeed ſo ſown will not be entirely loſt, that the word of the Lord will eventually proſper in ſecuring the end for which he ſends it—the healing or ſalvation of men, and their deliverance from all their deſtructions! Pſal. cvii. 20. Can faith reſt on a firmer baſis than the knowledge and belief of the word and character of that God, who will have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, and is able to accompliſh whatever he wills? What can be better calculated to inſpire hope, than to know it is not God's will *to caſt off for ever*; that he has thoughts of peace, not of evil, in order to give

them ſuch an end as we ought to deſire? Such a view of God's word and character is much fitted to encourage prayer in our own behalf, and in behalf of others, and alſo the moſt active efforts in doing good to all men, as we have opportunity? This view ſhews us how all men are and ever will be our neighbours, and how even the wicked, or thoſe who are called reprobates, may be the members of Chriſt, and of one another, as alſo of his people, tho' at the time ſick members.

Not to mention any other advantages flowing from the doctrine of the reſtoration, it may ſerve to rectify our judgment, with reſpect to the dead, the dying and the living, preſerving from the aſperity of cenſure, and the ſpirit of bigotry; promoting true charity, and guarding againſt its too common abuſes; and ſo leading to make the word of truth alone the rule of our ſentiments and conduct in ſuch matters. From what I have felt on my own heart, and read of the Chriſtian experience of others, I am perſuaded that when a perſon is moſt under the influence of divine grace, and ſet free from the inthralling fetters of ſyſtem, he will feel his mind expanded with univerſal love, a bleſſed emanation from that God who is love itſelf, and be diſpoſed to deſire and pray that all mankind may be bleſſed in his ſalvation. He will then feel and ſee the force of what Pope ſays in his Eſſay on Man, with which, omitting his beautiful ſimile, permit me to conclude this epiſtle.

"God loves from whole to parts: the human ſoul
Muſt riſe from individuals to the whole:
Friend, parent, neighbour, firſt it will embrace,
His country next, and next all human race.
Wide, and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in of ev'ry kind;
Earth ſmiles around, with boundleſs bounty bleſt,
And Heaven beholds its Image in his breaſt."

You may expect, Dear Sir, to hear yet from me, before I terminate this correſpondence. I am, &c.

LETTER XIX.

Will ye not receive inſtruction to hearken to my word, ſaith the Lord? They ſpeak a viſion of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. He that hath my word, let him ſpeak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? ſaith the Lord.—Ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hoſts our God.—Jer. xxxv. 13. & xxiii. 16. 28. 36.

Dear Sir,

THE Jews were a very wicked people, yet God claims a covenant marriage to them, and declares that he loved them with an everlaſting love. Speaking of Meſſiah as a king that ſhould reign and proſper, and execute judgment and juſ-

tice in the earth, it is added, "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely," Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. He promises, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born," Jer. xxxi. 1, 9. Do not these and the like declarations import much more than common systems will admit? What God promised to be to all the families of ancient Israel, even their God, that did he solemnly engage to be to all the families of the earth, when he promised to bless them in the Messiah.

The Lord is said to have remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a *thousand* generations." This is said to have been made with Abraham, and to be God's oath to Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, Psal. cv. 8, 9, 10. It is evident that all mankind are inlcuded in this covenant; for it is to extend to a thousand generations, and ought to be viewed as comprehending them all. The moral law is thus prefaced to the Jews, "I am the Lord thy God;" Exod. xx. 1. but will any undertake to prove that the same is not the preface of the divine law still to all to whom it is revealed? This privilege, so far from being peculiar to the Jews, appears to me to extend to all who are under law to God in every age; and the same truth is elsewhere asserted in scripture. Does not God often call the wicked Jews his people? Psal. lxxxi. 13. and will not the same apply to the mixed multitude of professed Christians? Will the Lord then always cast off his people?

I find the Lord promising, if I understand the connection aright, to cure and bless the very persons whom he is said to have slain in his anger, and whose dead bodies filled their houses.—"The dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger, and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city. Behold, I will bring it health, and cure, and I will cure *them*, and will reveal unto *them* the abundance of peace and truth," Jer. xxxiii. 5, 6. To explain this of a surviving remnant, is making very free with the sacred text, where the construction is neither perplexing, nor the language equivocal. It is evident, however, that the promise could not be fulfilled to them in this state, after they had been slain, and their bodies left dead and mangled in their habitation.

In my last, I finished what I intended, in answer to objections; nor have I knowingly waved any. Some will perhaps think I have been but too minute in my answers; but had they access to converse with persons of different capacities on the subject, as I have of late often had, they would see cause for it all. It is to be feared, that many are so wedded to their own opinion, and so determined to resist conviction from the plainest truths, that in reading these things, their chief concern will be to muster up all the cavils they can against them. If the plain conclusive argumentation of the apostles produced only, in those who were at the time most famed for piety, contradiction and blasphemy; and if many of our Lord's hearers repelled his clear, convincive reasoning, with the shadow of argument drawn from scripture; it need not surprise tho' this feeble essay in *defence of truth* should find similar treatment, from persons of like character.

Such hath been the fate of truth from the beginning, but none of its friends need to ſtumble thereat.

The abſurdities involved in the common doctrine, and by it transferred to the Deity himſelf, afford additional proof of the reſtoration. Impreſſed with this ſentiment, I lately committed my thoughts on this part of the ſubject to paper; but find I can here only inſert a few hints, this correſpondence having ſo much extended on my hand.—It may be laid down as a certain rule, That God doth nothing in vain—that he acts always in a way worthy of himſelf, and perfectly agreeable to the character he aſſumes. Chriſtians of the Armenian perſuaſion maintain, that he loves all men, gave his Son to the death for all, and ſeeks the ſalvation of all to whom his word is ſent. They aſcribe, however, to the obſtinacy of his guilty creatures the failure, with regard to them, of this benevolent plan; whence, comparatively, few are actually ſaved. This ſcheme aſcribes unbounded goodneſs to God, but at the ſame time makes him deficient in power, or in the native expreſſion of his love. A wiſe man does not give a great price for what he does not wiſh to poſſeſs; and his making the purchaſe is a proof of his deſire of poſſeſſing what he has purchaſed. What can prevent this, if he is able to ſecure it, and has not changed his opinion reſpecting its worth? With God there is neither defect of power, nor change of judgment; and his love muſt be as immutable as his nature. Love naturally ſeeks the good of its object, and will not fail to ſecure this, if practicable; but to God there is nothing impoſſible. It is therefore reaſonable to conclude, that whom he loves, and has redeemed by his Son, he will actually ſave.

In this reſpect, thoſe Chriſtians who are called Calviniſts are much more conſiſtent: but they are not ſo in all reſpects. They admit that the death of Chriſt is a ſufficient atonement for the whole world, had the Father ſo appointed; thus making his love and mercy far more contracted than the merits of the Son, and confining the effect much within the acknowledged efficacy of the cauſe. Is it conſiſtent, that our Lord ſhould wiſh to gather the Jews, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings; and that he ſhould knock for acceſs at the door of many, who, upon the common doctrine, were not given him by the Father, but left to periſh in their ſins? Would a prince make offers of pardon to rebels whom he determined never to forgive? What would you think of a man, who warmly urged his neighbour, from day to day, to accept of a favour, which he had purpoſed however not to beſtow? All this and much more, in my opinion, the received doctrine fathers on Chriſt, while it repreſents him as beſeeching and entreating myriads, in every age and country where his goſpel comes, to be reconciled to God, and yet as intending to ſave only a few; for it cannot be ſuppoſed that the Redeemer ſhould mean to ſave any whom he knew, according to that doctrine, his Father had decreed never to ſave. And yet, is not the Holy Spirit ſpoken of as ſtriving even with ſuch, perhaps for years, and averſe to give them up? What is all this to ſerve, when their ſalvation, on God's part, is not intended? It ſerves to leave them inexcuſeable, to aggravate their guilt, and to enhance their miſery. But is it worthy of that God, who is love itſelf, to promote theſe ends by ſuch means? What a ſtrange contraſt between the doctrine

part of many a ſermon, and the application! In the doctrine, the love of God is perhaps limited to a very few, very likely to one only for ſome thouſands of the human race; but in the improvement, all in the audience are warmly exhorted, and entreated, to come to the Saviour, and aſſured of a cordial welcome. They are told their not coming will aggravate their guilt, as diſobeying God's expreſs command. John tells us, that this is the command of God, that we ſhould believe on his Son Chriſt Jeſus; and it is addreſſed to all to whom his word comes. To me it appears unaccountable, that he ſhould command thoſe to believe on his Son to ſalvation, for whom he never intended him as a Saviour; and yet make their not believing the ſpecial ground of their condemnation. Is this like the conduct of a father towards his diſeaſed offspring? Do theſe doctrines honour God that aſcribe to him ſuch things? Is he at ſuch pains even with wicked men, giving them line upon line, precept upon precept, &c. and correcting them for their profit, as we ſee from the whole hiſtory of ancient Iſrael; and yet has he no gracious deſign in all this? Is it becoming a gracious almighty Father, to call millions of beings into exiſtence, in circumſtances that neceſſitate their endleſs miſery; while he determines not to take one effectual ſtep to prevent it? Is it the manner of earthly parents to correct their children, without the moſt diſtant intention of doing them good? and yet the very beſt of them are unworthy to be compared to their Maker. Far be it, however, from me, for a moment to entertain ſuch thoughts of God, or to aſcribe ſuch things to him; tho' the common doctrine does, and things ſtill more horrible, if poſſible. Thus Father, Son, and Spirit are implicated in a conduct, which no man would chuſe to have imputed to himſelf; and what ſhall we think of the doctrine that implies any ſuch imputation?

What a very different view have we of the divine adminiſtration, when we admit, that thoſe whom God hath choſen, of his ſovereign will and pleaſure, to ſtand in a peculiar relation to himſelf, and to enjoy peculiar bleſſings, were choſen with a view to the happineſs of their fellow creatures, and to pave the way for the full diſplay of his goodneſs in bringing this ultimately to paſs! Thus the election of grace, inſtead of being a bill of total excluſion to all the non-elect, as we are taught to view it, becomes the grand ſecurity, and a noble mean of effecting their final happineſs, in a way analogous to the benign deſign of every other ſelection of which we read in ſcripture. The common doctrine not only diveſts God of his immutability, but alſo makes him, in my opinion, the moſt changeable being in the univerſe. The word of truth aſſures us, That God is good to *all*, and that his tender mercies are over *all* his works: but that doctrine tells us, that he will ceaſe to do good to the wicked from the moment they die, to all eternity; and ſeeing ſome ſuch are always departing this life, then he muſt as often change the mode of his proceedure. If it be agreeable to his nature to do good to his enemies on earth, and to correct them for their profit; then it muſt be agreeable to his nature to act towards them in a ſimilar manner hereafter, unleſs he eſſentially change, which is impoſſible. The infliction of future puniſhment is his work, and the creatures that muſt endure it, his work-*manſhip*, as produced by his power, and ſupported in being by his providence.

His word aſſures us, that his tender mercies are over both; but this the common doctrine flatly denies, by excluding all mercy from thoſe works of the Almighty to all eternity. This not only makes him mutable, but alſo robs him of his paternal character, and directly contradicts his word.

The reſurrection, without which there could be no future judgment, or puniſhment, is one of our Lord's mediatory works, connected with, and flowing from his own reſurrection, as Paul teaches us, 1 Cor. xv. 13, 21. His coming into the world, therefore, as a Saviour, muſt greatly aggravate the miſery of the great bulk of the human race, or rather be the very baſis of it; inſtead of that event being the ſubject of good tidings of great joy to *all* people. But is there any authority from ſcripture to believe this? When we read that God had no pleaſure in brutal ſacrifices, can we ſuppoſe that he ſo planned the economy of his great family, as to make the eternal ſacrifice of the far greater part of it to his juſtice neceſſary? and yet, that his juſtice ſhall never be ſatisfied, and of courſe, never glorified by this ſacrifice.

The common doctrine counteracts the benign deſign and tendency of God's threatenings, by leading men to undervalue or deſpiſe every thing in them that falls ſhort of never-ending torments; whereas the ſcriptures teach us to ſtand in awe of ſinning againſt him on account of his very threatenings, and of the execution of them in the preſent ſtate. As for the threatenings of paternal corrections, and all his chaſtening as the Father of our ſpirits, it leads to deſpiſe them; and the viſible effects manifeſt the unhappy tendency of the doctrine. Whence elſe is it that we hear ſuch impious blaſphemies from the mouth of many profeſſed Chriſtians, ſneering at every idea of limited puniſhment, as holding forth impunity to the wicked? For theſe impious atheiſtical ſpeeches let them anſwer to their Judge, when he comes to convict all that are ungodly among us of all their ungodly deeds, and of all their hard ſpeeches which they preſume to ſpeak againſt him, and his truths and ways, Jude ver. 15. If it be worthy of a father to ſpare the rod, when his threatening has produced in his child humble confeſſion of his fault, and obedience; muſt we not grant that it is equally worthy of him to lay aſide the rod, when his paternal diſcipline produces the ſame effect? We ſee both exemplified in the courſe of his holy providence; the firſt in the caſe of Nineveh, and in many other inſtances that might be produced; and the laſt in his conduct towards his people every day. Let any one read the 36th of Jeremiah, and ſay if the grand object of the divine threatenings there be not to prevent the neceſſity of executing them. This is ſummed up in verſe 3d,—"It may be that the houſe of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpoſe to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their ſin." Here the execution of God's purpoſe was ſuſpended on the conduct of the Jews; and will any one venture to ſay, that they had it not in their power to avoid what procured that execution? Thus have I briefly adverted to a few of theſe things which appear to me abſurdities contained in the common ſyſtem, or flowing from it; but all which are avoided by the doctrine of the reſtoration.

Permit me to contraſt, in a few particulars, the goſpel that was preached by the inſpired ſervants of God, as recorded in their writings; and that which is held forth by our ſyſtematic divinity, placing the one oppoſite to the other, that in the contraſt, we may perceive, as in a glaſs, how far their features accord.

The Sacred Writers affirm,

That Satan's head ſhall be *bruiſed;* that the God of peace ſhall ſhortly *bruiſe* him under the feet of the ſaints; that Chriſt took part of fleſh and blood, that thro' death he might *deſtroy* him that had the power of death, that is the devil, Gen. iii. 15. Rom. xvi. 20. Heb. ii. 14.

That in Chriſt, the ſeed of Abraham, *all* the nations *all* the families, and *all* the kindreds of the earth ſhall be bleſſed; even all the nations that God has made, Gen xii. 3 —xviii. 18.—xxii. 18. Acts iii. 25. Pſal. lxxvi. 9.

That Jeſus taſted death for *every* man, takes away the ſin of the world, and gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time, Heb ii. 9. John i. 29. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

That *all* the kindreds of the nations ſhall come and worſhip before God; that *all* nations ſhall call him bleſſed, Pſal. xxii. 27.—lxxii. 17.

That Jeſus is the light of the world, and gave his fleſh for the life of the world, John ix. 5 —vi. 51.

That if we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs, 1 John i. 9.

That God loves his enemies, or is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil; that when they were enemies, they were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; and being reconciled, ſhall be ſaved by his life, Luke vi. 35. Rom. v. 10.

That the kingdoms of this world ſhall become the kingdoms of God and of his Chriſt; and that he ſhall reign, even over them, for ever and ever, Rev. xi. 15.

That death ſhall loſe its ſting and be deſtroyed; and the grave or hell, loſe its victory. If death receives its death or deſtruction by the death of Chriſt, how ſhall it exiſt and reign without end?

That before Chriſt ceaſe to reign as Mediator, he ſhall put down *all* rule, and *all* authority, and power; and that death, as the very laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, 1 Cor. xv 24 26.

That the Lord God will wipe away tears from off *all* faces; and *all* tears from their eyes, Iſa. xxv. 8. Rev. vii 17.

That future puniſhment is a cup of red wine full of mixture, the dregs of which all the wicked of the earth ſhall wring out and drink them; Pſal. lxxv 8; but that however terrible, or of long duration this puniſhment, we are taught to view the exhauſted cup as a proof that future miſery will have an end, Iſa. li. 17, 22.

That God hath concluded, or ſhut up together *all impenitent ſinners* of the Jews in unbe-

Common Syſtems, and their abettors, affirm,

That the head of the old Serpent ſhall never be ſo bruiſed, as to loſe its life and fatal power to ſting; and that he ſhall always have the power of the ſecond death, and as a devil be never deſtroyed; but have cauſe to all eternity to boaſt of ſubjects far more numerous than thoſe of the God of heaven.

That no nations, as ſuch, ſhall be bleſſed in Chriſt, only a few elect individuals from among ſome of them; and that there are millions of families, from which not a ſingle elect veſſel is taken

That our Lord died for his elect only, or, if he did, that none ſhall reap any benefit thence but thoſe who believe in this ſtate; and that the ſin of the world ſhall never be taken away.

That only a remnant of the nations ſhall be brought to worſhip God, and call him bleſſed; the reſt being left to all eternity to lie under the dominion of ſin and miſery.

That the world, properly ſo called, ſhall never derive light or life from him.

That tho' we confeſs our ſins, he is not faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs to all eternity, if we once paſs beyond the bounds of this mortal life.

That God loves none but his elect;—that the reſt of the world have no concern in the death of his Son, and ſhall not be ſavingly benefited by his life.

That the far greater number of the kingdoms of this world or of the people of whom they conſiſt in every age, ſhall be eternally under the dominion of the wicked one,

That death ſhall never be deſtroyed, or loſe its ſting, it being firmly fixed in their power to all eternity, during which the grave or hell ſhall maintain his victory.

That ſin, Satan, and death ſhall maintain their rule and power over unknown millions of intelligent beings without end; and theſe remain enemies to God after the laſt enemy is deſtroyed.

That the whole world of ungodly ſinners ſhall continue to weep and wail to all eternity, their faces covered with all the marks of ſorrow.

That future miſery is a cup which all the wicked of the earth ſhall drink, but at the dregs of which they ſhall never come, whatever meaning the ſcriptures may annex to drinking the dregs of this cup.

That God concludes the non-elect part of Jews and Gentiles in unbelief, that they might

The Sacred Writers affirm,

lief, that he might have mercy upon *all*; and the ſame applies to Gentile ſinners, Rom. xi. 32.

That as in Adam *all* die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

That the many who were made ſinners by the diſobedience of the firſt man, ſhall be made righteous by the obedience of the Lord Jeſus; and that where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound; that it might reign thro' righteouſneſs unto the eternal life of thoſe over whom ſin reigned unto death, Rom. v. 19, 20, 21.

That every plant which our heavenly Father has not planted, ſhall be rooted up; and that our Lord, inſtead of deſtroying God's works, will deſtroy the works of the devil, Mat. xv. 13. 1 John iii. 8.

That the Lord will have a deſire to the work of his hands; and that the creature, or creation, ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of God's children, Job. xiv. 15. Rom. viii. 21.

That mercy ſhall be built up for ever; that the period of vengeance is but like a day, that of mercy like a year; and that mercy ſhall rejoice over the miſerable, after judgment has finiſhed its awful work, Pſal. lxxxix 2. James ii 13. Iſa. xxxiv. 8. & lxiii. 4.

That Jeſus is the *Saviour of the world*; that he prayed for the world, as did alſo Solomon his type; and that God heareth him always, and will fulfil his petitions, John iv. 42 xi. 42. xviii. 21, 23. 2 Chron. vi. 32, 33. 1 Kings viii. 43, 60. Pſal. xx. 5.

That *all* the kings of the earth ſhall praiſe the Lord, when they hear the words of his mouth; yea, that they ſhall ſing in the ways of the Lord, Pſa. cxxxviii. 4, 5.—That, in this reſpect, the voluntary homage and tribute paid to Solomon as his type, by all the kings of the then known earth, may be viewed as a predictive pledge of what Meſſiah ſhall receive from all ſuch characters in future, 1 Kings iv. 21, 34. & x. 24, 25.

That the Lord corrects his offspring for their profit, that they may become partakers of his holineſs: that he is the Father of our ſpirits, and that thoſe who are ſubject to him as ſuch ſhall live, Heb. xii 6—9.

That all things under the law were ſhadows of good things to come; but that the ſubſtance or reality is of Chriſt; and that the jubilee muſt therefore be ſo alſo, Heb. x. 1. Lev. xxv.

That the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation to *all* men hath appeared, Tit. ii. 11. margin, not common grace, as ſome maintain, but

Common Syſtems, and their abettors, affirm,

be ſubjected to never-ending miſeries; not "that he might have mercy upon *all*."

That millions, countleſs as the ſand, have died in Adam, who ſhall never be made alive in Chriſt.

That the many made ſinners by Adam's diſobedience ſhall never be made righteous by the obedience of Chriſt; that ſin hath abounded in millions to their deſtruction, toward whom grace ſhall never ſuperabound; and that the far greater part of thoſe over whom ſin reigns to death, ſhall never partake of eternal life.

That the plants which God hath not planted ſhall remain rooted for ever; and that Jeſus will deſtroy God's works, but not the works of the devil.

That the Lord will have no deſire to the work of his hands, but leave it eternally in hell as polluted veſſels, in which he will take no pleaſure; that the moſt noble parts of the creation, fallen angels, and wicked men, ſhall never be delivered from the bondage of corruption, to the leaſt ſhare in the glorious liberty of the children of God, which includes freedom from ſin and miſery.

That mercy ſhall not be built up for ever, death terminating her work, with regard to each impenitent ſinner, and the day of judgment in reſpect of the whole; that the period of mercy compared to that of judgment, bears not the proportion of a moment to an age; and that judgment ſhall preclude the exerciſe of mercy from the miſerable to all eternity; and, of courſe, that judgment ſhall rejoice againſt mercy.

That he is not the Saviour of the world, but only of a few choſen out of the world; and that the prayer neither of Chriſt, nor of Solomon as his type, ſhall ever be anſwered in behalf of the world.

That all the kings of the earth ſhall never praiſe the Lord, when they hear the words of his mouth, the far greater part of them having died ignorant of him, and enemies to him; whence they ſhall hear from his mouth only the words of that ſentence which ſhall doom them to endleſs perdition; for which they ſhall never ſing in his ways; and that the type ſhall never be fulfilled in the antitype.

That he corrects none of his offspring for their profit but the choſen few, meaning to make none elſe holy. Are the fathers of our fleſh much more attentive and affectionate to their children than the Father of our ſpirits?

That the jubilee ſhall never be realized under the Meſſiah's reign, in the full extent of the figure; the common doctrine retaining the debt, the mortgaged inheritance, and the captives in a ſtate of bondage to all eternity.

That no grace of God hath appeared that bringeth ſalvation to all men, either in diſpenſation or application; it not being God's deſign to ſave

The Sacred Writers affirm,

what Paul calls *ſaving grace*, as the phraſe literally denotes.

That Jeſus is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, John i. 9. and was to be a light to enlighten the Gentiles, or the nations, as well as the Jews, Iſa. xlii. 6.—xlix. 6.

That the kings of the earth, after having been ſhut up in priſon many days, ſhall be viſited, and found wanting in ſomething previouſly poſſeſſed, Iſa. xxiv. 22. text and margin.

That the birth of Chriſt ſhall afford good tidings of great joy to *all* people, or to mankind of every clime, age and nation; and that by it God diſcovers, and will yet manifeſt *good will to men* without exception, Luke ii. 10, 14.

That *all* things were created, and are preſerved for God's pleaſure, who yet declares with an oath, that he hath no pleaſure in the death or miſery of the ſinner; and yet his purpoſe and counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure, Rev. iv. 11. Ezek. xviii. 23, 32. xxxiii 11. Iſa. xlvi. 10.

That the Father having loved the Son, gave *all* things into his hand; that he is given to be head over all things to his church; that all that are given him will come to him, and that all that cometh to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out, John iii. 35. xiii. 3. vi. 37, 39.

That whom the Lord loves, he loves unto the end, and changeth not, John xiii. 1. Mal. iii. 6.

That God quickeneth all things;—that the Son quickeneth whomſoever he will;—and that he will have all men to be ſaved, 1 Tim. vi. 13. John v. 21. 1 Tim. ii. 4.

That iſſues from death belong to Meſſiah, and that he has received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them. Pſal. lxviii. 20, 18. Rev. xxi. 5.

That as *all* things were created by Jeſus Chriſt, and as *all* things conſiſt by him; ſo it hath pleaſed the Father that all fulneſs ſhould dwell in him, that by him he might reconcile *all* things unto himſelf, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven, or, of enemies in a ſtate of variance, make them, in due time, friends in a ſtate of favor and acceptance, Col. i. 16, 17, 20.

Common Syſtems, and their abettors, affirm,

or recover all men.

That millions come into the world to whom he neither imparts, nor means to impart any light as the true light that came himſelf into the world, they having no intereſt in him in that character.

That they ſhall never be viſited in mercy, after having been ſhut up in priſon at the laſt judgment; and inſtead of being found wanting in their enmity to God and goodneſs, they ſhall increaſe in this to all eternity.

That no ſuch thing was intended by that event, and that God cannot be ſuppoſed to bear good will to any whom he had determined not to ſave; and that is all mankind, the elect excepted.

That God's end in creating and preſerving the far greater part of his intelligent creatures, is not his own pleaſure, or that the end of their creation and preſervation ſhall never be anſwered; that they ſhall lie eternally under that in which he has no pleaſure, but the reverſe, and never attain a ſtate in which he ſhall take pleaſure, tho' it is ſaid he will rejoice in his works, even in all his works.

That none will ever come to him but the elect; that all the reſt of men will be eternally baniſhed from his preſence, and never come to him as a Saviour.

That God once loved an unknown number of intelligent beings, whom he now hates, and will always torment.

That the far greater part of rational creatures ſhall remain always dead; that neither the Father nor the Son will quicken them to all eternity, and that he will not have all men to be ſaved.

That iſſues from death belong not to him, he having no authority or intention to deliver any from the power of the ſecond death; and that he received gifts for none but his elect; and that millions of the rebellious ſhall never receive a ſingle ſaving gift from him, and that God will not to all eternity dwell among them in a gracious manner.

That tho' he created and preſerves *all things*, and tho' it is ſaid the Father was pleaſed to reconcile theſe *all things* to himſelf by him; yet that phraſe muſt not be taken in the ſame ſenſe when applied to him as the Saviour of the world, his creating and redeeming power not being of the ſame extent;—that it hath not pleaſed the Father by him to reconcile *all things* to himſelf, but only a few things, and none at all of the things in heaven, or that were formed in heaven, and have their principality in the viſible heaven or air, that need reconciliation, it, on the contrary, pleaſing the Father that all theſe ſhould remain eternally in a ſtate of enmity and rebellion.

The Sacred Writers affirm,

That Meſſiah is the firſt-born of every creature, and the firſt-born from or of the dead, the ſame as the heir and the high prieſt of the whole creation, and of the dead, whoſe Lord he is alſo ſaid to be. Col. i. 15. 18. Rom. xiv. 9.

That the Lord is long ſuffering to us ward, *not willing* that *any* ſhould periſh, but that *all* ſhould come to repentance; and that the long ſuffering of our Lord is ſalvation, or intended finally to ſecure the ſalvation of thoſe towards whom it is exerciſed, 2 Pet. iii. 9, 15. If God does not will that any ſhould ſo periſh as never to be brought to repentance, can we ſuppoſe that he has alſo willed that millions ſhould ſo periſh as never to be brought to repentance? Does this will of the Almighty Creator import no more than a faint inefficient wiſh?

That the death of Chriſt ſhall be the mean of finiſhing tranſgreſſion and making an end of ſins, Dan. ix. 24.

That if any man ſin (and who is there among the ſons of men that does not?) we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, who is the propitiation for our ſins; and *not* for ours *only*, but alſo for the ſins of the *whole* world, 1 John ii. 1, 2. If the *whole world* here means only the elect, would John repreſent himſelf, and all his fellow Chriſtians, as diſtinct from that world, and making no part of it? Seeing this cannot be the caſe, we muſt infer that Chriſt is an advocate with the Father for the whole world, and that every man and the whole world has an intereſt in his advocacy, and will, one way or other, be benefited thereby.

That by the blood of Meſſiah's covenant God has ſent forth, that is, in the language of prophecy, ſhall ſend forth his priſoners out of the pit wherein is no water, Zach. ix. 11.

That he ſhall ſay to the priſoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves, Iſaiah xlix. 9. and that Jehovah has given him for this purpoſe, to eſtabliſh or raiſe up the earth, even the new earth in which righteouſneſs ſhall dwell, verſe 8.

That when ſinners cry unto the Lord in the extremity of their trouble, he ſaves them out of their diſtreſſes; and ſends his word and heals them, and delivers them from their deſtructions, Pſalm cvii. 19, 20.

That the ſun, as a type of Chriſt, extends the influence of his heat to every region, and to every object in this world, Pſalm xix. 6.

That the Lord will not always chide, neither keep his anger for ever, Pſalm ciii. 9.

That he exhorts all his works, in all places of his dominion, *to bleſs him*, which implies that

Common Syſtems and their abettors affirm,

That he will inherit no part of intelligent creation but elect angels and men, the reſt being deſtined to remain always in a worſe ſtate than the garden of the ſluggard; and that he will never diſcharge any part of his prieſtly office for behoof of any other.

That the long-ſuffering of our Lord has no ſuch object in view, God having willed that all the non-elect ſhould eternally periſh, and manifeſted this by paſſing them over in the decree of election, and reprobating, or conſigning them, from eternity, without any poſſibility of recovery, to endleſs damnation, whence he cannot will that all ſhould come to repentance, becauſe this would be willing contrary to his own unalterable will and purpoſe; and that therefore his long ſuffering is exerciſed to ſecure the ſalvation of none but the elect.

That his death ſhall never finiſh tranſgreſſion, and make an end of ſin; it being ordained or permitted that ſin and miſery ſhall endure and triumph over the far greater part of God's rational works ſo long as he exiſts, and that he will never deſtroy them.

That Chriſt pleads with his Father for none but the elect; and that he is the propitiation for their ſins only, and not for the ſins of the whole world, or indeed any part of it, theſe highly favoured few excepted, the reſt of the world having been abandoned to Satan as his poſſeſſion, will be doomed to never-ending deſtruction, let Moſes and the prophets, Chriſt and his apoſtles, ſay what they will to the contrary.

That thoſe who are in the ſtricteſt ſenſe his priſoners, the captives of the ſecond death, ſhall never be ſent forth by the blood of his covenant, from the pit of hell, the only pit in the univerſe in which there is no water; that being the deſtined abode of his priſoners to all eternity.

That he ſhall never ſay to the priſoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkneſs—the darkneſs of ſin, miſery, and bondage, Shew yourſelves; and that this earth ſhall never be eſtabliſhed, or raiſed up, after the conflagration, ſo as to be the abode of righteouſneſs.

That the Lord will never ſave ſinners out of their diſtreſſes, and ſend his word to heal them, whence he ſhall deliver them from the deſtruction of the ſecond death, let their cries be ever ſo loud and often repeated.

That there is a region filled with inhabitants, where the enlivening beams of the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall never be felt. Has not Chriſt in all things the pre-eminence?

That he will always chide, and retain his anger without end.

That all his works, in all places of his dominion, ſhall never bleſs him, nor have cauſe to

The Sacred Writers affirm,

he will give them abundant cauſe, Pſal. ciii. 22.

That the Lord ſhall rejoice in his works;—that all his works ſhall praiſe him, Pſalm civ. 31. cxlv. 10.

That *every* creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, in the ſea, and *all* that are in them, ſhall aſcribe bleſſing, and honor, and glory, and power, to him that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever, Rev. v. 13.

That the Lord's anger endureth but a moment; that weeping may endure for a night but that joy cometh in the morning, Pſalm xxx. 5.

That God is love, and the Father of mercies, in whom compaſſions flow; whence we may infer that nothing contrary to this character can proceed from him, and that vindictive wrath is repugnant to his nature, 1 John iv. 8, 16. Pſal ciii. 8. cxlv. 8. cxxx. 4, 7.

That by reaſon of the greatneſs of his power his enemies ſhall ſubmit themſelves unto him, Pſalm lxvi. 3.

That every knee ſhall bow to him, and every tongue ſwear, and all that are incenſed againſt him be aſhamed; the emitted oath of God that ſhall not return void aſcertaining this; and that every tongue ſhall confeſs Meſſiah Lord, to the glory of God the Father, which can only be by the aid of the Holy Spirit, Iſaiah xlv. 23. Phil ii. 10. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

That he will not contend for ever, or be always wroth, leſt the ſpirits would fail before him, and the ſouls that he has made;—that he retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy, Iſaiah lvii. 16. Micah vii. 18.

That the Lord will not caſt off for ever; that tho' he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion, according to the multitude of his mercies, Lam. iii. 31, 32, &c

That Satan, the Prince of this world, is caſt out, and ſhall reign but a little while; and that ſince Jeſus has been lifted up, he will draw *all* men after him, John xii. 31, 32.

That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, the Father ſhall gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; or that he will bring them back to him as their common head, who is the head of every man, and the Lord of the living and the dead, Eph. i 10.

That it hath pleaſed the Father by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven, Coloſ. i. 20.

Common Syſtems and their abettors affirm.

it; the continued exiſtence of many of them being their greateſt curſe.

That the Lord ſhall never have juſt cauſe to rejoice in his works nor all his works to praiſe him; the far greater part of them being to remain vile, polluted, and miſerable always.

That all and every creature in their different places ſhall never join in any ſuch ſong; the exerciſe of the far greater part of them being to all eternity rage, blaſphemy, and mutual execrations, curſing one another and the Author of their being, and Inflictor of their torments.

That his anger ſhall always endure; and that weeping ſhall endure throughout a night, which ſhall never be ſucceeded with a morning.

That tho' God is love and the Father of mercies, who is full of compaſſion; yet inexhorable and relentleſs wrath ſhall proceed from him to all eternity, to torment his wretched offspring, his love and mercy having no reſpect to any of his guilty creatures but his elect people, whom alone he will ſave.

That no exerciſe of his power ſhall bring his enemies to ſubmit themſelves to him, in the proper ſenſe of ſubjection.

That millions of knees ſhall never bow in homage to him millions of tongues never ſwear allegiance to him, or confeſs him Lord to the glory of the Father; but on the contrary curſe and blaſpheme him to all eternity.

That he will contend for ever, and be always wroth, tho' the ſpirits ſhould fail before him, and the ſouls that he has made; and that he does not ſo delight in mercy, as to prevent his retaining his anger for ever.

That the Lord will caſt off for ever; that he will cauſe grief to millions on whom he will have no compaſſion, according to the multitude of his mercies, &c.; they being made or called into exiſtence for the day of evil, which they cannot eſcape to all eternity.

That Satan's reign ſhall have no end; that he will never be ſo judged as to be caſt out; and that Chriſt ſhall never draw any after him, but his elect; all the reſt of mankind being appointed to wrath, and to be troden under his feet.

That all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, ſhall never be gathered together in Chriſt, or vitally united to him by his Father.

That it hath not pleaſed the Father by Chriſt to reconcile all things to himſelf, whether they be things on earth, ſuch as the non-elect, or things in heaven, or that were formed there, ſuch as the fallen angels; it being his unalterable purpoſe that both ſhould remain in a ſtate of enmity to him ſo long as he exiſts.

The Sacred Writers affirm,

John affirms, that he and his fellow apoſtles teſtified, that Jeſus is *the Saviour of the world*, the grand title of his office which he is appointed to execute. Is it the ſame thing to be the Saviour of the whole, and the Saviour only of a ſmall part? 1 John iv. 14. If God ſent his ſon to be the Saviour of the world, will he never ſave it?

That God our Saviour will have *all* men to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; and that men pray for this, lifting up holy hands, without doubting, 1 Tim. ii. 4, 8.

That after the church of the firſt-born is completely glorified, deſcending in her nuptial attire from the higheſt heaven, like a bride prepared for her huſband; Jeſus will make all things new, wipe away all tears from thoſe who ſhall be then found ſhedding them, and put an end to death, ſorrow, crying, and pain, to all eternity; that then the leaves of the tree of life ſhall be for the healing of the nations, and the pure river of the water of life for their quickening and refreſhment, Rev. xxi. 4. xxii. 1, 2.

That Meſſiah is the heir of the world, and the appointed heir of all things; that children are his inheritance, and the fruit of the womb his reward, Heb. i. 2. Rom. iv. 13. Pſalm cxxvii. 3.

That there ſhall be a reſtitution of all things, and that God has ſpoken of this by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began. Acts iii. 21

That all nations ſhall be bleſſed in Meſſiah, and call him bleſſed;—that he ſhall inherit all nations; and that all the nations that God has made ſhall come and worſhip before him, and glorify his name, Gen. xviii. 18.—xvii. 18. Pſal. lxxii. 17.—lxxii. 8.—lxxvi. 9. But who can reconcile the above paſſages with Pſalm ix. 17? for both cannot be true on the common ſyſtem.

That our Lord came to ſave that which was loſt, Mat xviii. 11.

That theſe are the pure words of the Lord, purified ſeven times as ſilver in a furnace;—that theſe words are true and faithful, Pſalm xii. 6. Rev. xxi. 5.

Common Syſtems, and their abettors, affirm,

That tho' John and his brother apoſtles teſtified, and the Chriſtians in their day believed on their teſtimony, that Jeſus is the Saviour of the world; yet we ought to believe that he is not the Saviour of the world, but of a few choſen out of the world, who may be called the elect world; and that to preach or believe otherwiſe, is merely of the worſt kind.

That God our Saviour will not have *all* men men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; and that to pray for it would be to pray in oppoſition to the immutable decrees of heaven.

That no ſuch thing will take place to all eternity—that theſe things reſpect the ordinary ſtate of the church, the millennium, or the heavenly ſtate; or ſomething upon which the traditions of the elders are not yet agreed, and commentators greatly differ.

That he ſhall never inherit what he is heir of, and appointed by his Father to heir; that his inheritance ſhall remain to all eternity in a worſe ſtate than the garden of the ſluggard, and his reward be never claimed.

That there ſhall not be a reſtitution of all things; and that God ſpake of no ſuch thing by the mouth of his holy prophets, having never intended it.

That the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;—that all thoſe who are once turned into that region of miſery, ſhall remain there to all eternity under the curſe; and conſequently, that all nations cannot be bleſſed in Chriſt, call him bleſſed, or come before God to worſhip, and glorify his name, and that Meſſiah can never enjoy them as his inheritance.

That our Lord came to ſave only part of what was loſt, and that by far the leaſt part.

That theſe words are not ſo pure and purified, as not to need the aid of human wiſdom to purge away their excreſcence; and that they are not to be deemed faithful and true, till they paſs thro' the ordeal of the ſyſtem-mongers.

Can any doctrine be of God that directly contradicts ſo many plain paſſages of his holy word? for *no lie is of the truth*, 1 John ii. 21. Does he command us to love all men—to love our enemies, forgive them, pray for them, and be ready to do them good; and all this after the example of our Father in heaven? and yet, if we believe the common doctrine, he himſelf will always hate, and never forgive his enemies. Would he have us to exceed far the example he has ſet us, and to be more perfect, in this reſpect than our Maker? Or has he failed in any neceſſary point in the pattern he calls us to imitate?

In contraſting the word of truth, and the ſyſtems of men, I have not knowingly placed the latter in a wrong light, or fixed upon it a contradiction to the

ſacred text, without apparent cauſe, of which every one ſhould judge for himſelf. I know the paſſages adduced are uſually reſtricted to the elect; but they are expreſſed in general terms; and who has a right to diveſt theſe of their generality, or reſtrict their application, if God himſelf has not done it? It is not enough, that the ſyſtems of men, or the creed of this or that church, require ſuch liberty to be taken with the contents of the volume of inſpiration; if theſe contents, compared together, and expounded by the aid of their own light, make not this neceſſary. Theſe human productions, venerable as their authors or compilers might have been, will not juſtify us in taking ſuch freedoms with the word of God, in order to make it harmonize with theſe canonized ſtandards.—To the reaſon and conſcience of fellow-men, and the tribunal of our future Judge, may we refer the determination, whether of the two do moſt to injure and counteract the word of truth, and expoſe it to the attacks, and even ridicule of freethinkers; thoſe who palm upon it ſuch palpable contradictions, and uſe all their addreſs to accommodate them to their reſpective ſyſtems; or thoſe who expound the true and faithful ſayings of Jehovah agreeable to their plain and obvious meaning, and ſo as to avoid any ſuch contradictions, to which many, beſides the above, might be added.

Is it not time that thoſe who profeſs to believe the goſpel, and regard Jeſus as their Lord and Saviour, ſhould no longer heſitate between two opinions? Do the ſcriptures declare that he is the Saviour of the world? and alſo, that he is not? Do they maintain that all the families of the earth are to be bleſſed in him, and that all the nations that he has made ſhall come and worſhip before him, and call him bleſſed? and do they alſo maintain that they ſhall not? Do they aſſert that Jeſus is the Saviour of *all* men;—that he will deſtroy the works of the devil;—wipe away *all* tears from off *all* faces;—that he will make *all* things new;—that the heavens muſt receive or retain him until the *times* of the *reſtitution* of all things? and do they alſo declare that ſuch things ſhall never take place? That ſuch things are plainly expreſſed in ſcripture, cannot be denied. That the received doctrine contradicts their plain meaning, and ſathers upon them a very different or oppoſite ſcheme of things, muſt be obvious to all who have taken the pains to examine it. Can a propoſition and its reverſe be true? If the common faith on the point of future miſery, and the tenets that ſtand connected with it, be true, what dependance can we have on the Bible as a conſiſtent rule of faith? or what blame can we attach to Deiſts for rejecting its authority? Let *them* think of this, whoſe ſyſtem diveſts it of that authority, to which it is entitled as a revelation from God.

If we admit that the angel preached the goſpel to the ſhepherds, when he ſaid, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to *all* people;" or that this is a proper definition of the goſpel, can we ſay that thoſe preach it, who deny the laſt clauſe, or make the birth of a Saviour to be the occaſion of aggravating the guilt and miſery of millions, and that many a people ſhall never have cauſe to rejoice therein? Our Lord's unlimited commiſſion to his apoſtles, to go and preach the goſpel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15. *perfectly agrees* to the angel's meſſage. The goſpel, when read in the light of that

faith which it inſpires, and received in love, is calculated to produce a benevolent diſpoſition towards all men, as objects of God's care and love;—and alſo a cordial belief that he has a kind and merciful deſign by the goſpel towards all men. Were it otherwiſe, did God love none but his elect, or, which is the ſame thing, did he hate the reſt of mankind, then it could not be our duty to love them; but to poſſeſs the ſame mind that is in Jeſus, and he has the mind of God. But the command to love all men is a plain proof that he who gave it loves them, and enforces it by his own example.

Many inculcate that all men are by nature under what they call a covenant of works, the elect themſelves, before converſion, not excepted, But ſuch a notion cannot, in my opinion, be proved from ſcripture. That they are liable to the penalty incurred by violating the divine law, till they believe in the Lord Jeſus for juſtification, is certain. But ever ſince man fell, God deals with the human race by a Mediator, who is the grand medium even of common mercies. There is no other way revealed in ſcripture of communicating the leaſt favour to guilty men; and tho' the ſcriptures were not ſo expreſs on the head, this of itſelf gives reaſon to believe that Jeſus did taſte death for every man, and gave himſelf a ranſom for all.—The Calviniſtic ſyſtem forbids us to believe, that God has made proviſion for the final happineſs of all men; and the abettors of it avow this as their fixed principle. When the world is ſpoken of as the object of God's redeeming love, they tell us that the elect only are intended by the term, as being the beſt part of the world, and that part of it on account of which it is preſerved in exiſtence. Thus have I repeatedly heard, and perhaps you too, the phraſe *elect world* uſed in prayer and in ſermons. Let us try how this will anſwer. John ſays, "God ſo loved the *elect* world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever," namely of the elect world, "believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life," John iii. 16. Does not this paſſage, expounded on the Calviniſtic ſyſtem, plainly import that ſome of the elect may not believe on Chriſt, but may periſh, and ſo fall ſhort of attaining everlaſting life? They muſt either admit this, or give up their ſenſe of the text. When the ſame term is uſed twice in the ſame verſe, and they apply it in the laſt clauſe to the elect, the fair conſtruction of language, as well as common ſenſe, obliges us to apply it to them in the firſt clauſe alſo, unleſs ſomething in the context forbid this. Thus, in Iſa. liii. 6. "*All* we like ſheep have gone aſtray; and the Lord hath laid," or, as on margin, "made the iniquities of us *all* to meet on him," that is Meſſiah; and ſo alſo in Rom. v. 18. &c. and 1 Cor. xv. 22. "For, as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive." Thus, upon the common ſyſtem, it may be maintained, that none went aſtray like loſt ſheep—that judgment came upon none to condemnation—and that none died in Adam, or were made ſinners by his diſobedience, but the elect; the connection requiring theſe and ſimilar paſſages to be ſo underſtood, upon that ſyſtem.—What proves too much, evidently ſerves not the purpoſe for which it is adduced.

Divine grace, wherever implanted, will aways counteract the tendency of every oppoſite principle; whence many Calviniſts are more benevolent than ſeveral parts of their own ſyſtem would lead them to be. Theſe naturally tend to pro-

duce contempt of thoſe who may happen to differ from them, if not a ſpirit of bitterneſs towards them; and conſequently, cannot be the genuine fruit of the goſpel of the benevolent Jeſus. The difference between that zeal which burns for party-names, forms, and tenets, and that zeal according to knowledge, which adorns the Chriſtian character, is marked in the following ſtanza:

"True zeal is merciful and mild,
Can pity and forbear;
The falſe is headſtrong, fierce, and wild,
And breathes revenge and war."

Men are by turns the very thing they condemn, and that both in theory and practice. In the courſe of my own reading of late, I could ſelect a number of ſentences, from authors who avow their belief of the doctrine of eternal miſery, that are full and expreſs in favour of the reſtoration. This ſhews the force of truth on the human mind, when left to itſelf. When you hear an avowed Arminian ſay, that the inheritance of the ſaints in light ſhall be poſſeſſed by all for whom Chriſt died, or expreſſions to that effect, upon his known principles the inference is plain. In the Methodiſt Magazine for the year 1799, p. 223. I find the following remarks, in an account of a Mr Aſpden, upon his death bed, or a little before his departure. "We ſung ſeveral verſes ſuitable to the ſolemn occaſion, and his ſoul was all praiſe and love. From the fulneſs of his heart he ſpake expreſsly of God's *univerſal love* to mankind. It has often been remarked, (adds the Editor) that when perſons are happy in the Lord, they are ſaved from narrowneſs of ſoul, and proclaim Chriſt the *univerſal* Saviour of men. This heavenly fire warms the cold breaſt, expands the contracted mind, and, by its aſſimilating power, changes its poſſeſſor into a holy ſimilitude of him, who is *loving unto every man*, and whoſe *tender mercies are over all his works*."

I alſo find in the Univerſaliſt's Magazine, vol. ii. p. 84. an extract from an "Eſſay on God's Univerſal Love," in the above work, for Auguſt, 1784, then termed the Arminian Magazine. Among other things to the ſame effect, we have the following. "In the viſible church is to be found the complete knowledge of God-man, head and high-prieſt of *all intelligent natures; and of the reſtitution of all things to their primitive innocence, purity, order, and perfection.*"

The following extract from the Miſcellaneous Thoughts of that truly pious, benevolent, and learned man, Iſaac Watts, p. 244. furniſhes a key to his ſentiments reſpecting the reſtoration, taken in connection with ſome other paſſages in his works; and tenders a reproof to intolerant bigots of all parties.—"O "where ſhall that city ſtand whoſe inhabitants all traffic in intellectual treaſures, and ſet forth all their new improvements, and acquiſitions in open day-"light, without the danger of public penalties or reproach? Where ſhall that "happy race of men be born, who ſhall ſeek truth with an unbiaſſed ſoul, and "ſhall ſpeak it freely to mankind, without the fear of parties, or the odium of "ſingularity? When ſhall that golden age ariſe in Great Britain in which every "rich genius ſhall produce his brighteſt ſentiments to the honour of God, and "to the general profit of men, and yet ſtand exempted from common ſlander? "*When ſhall* the ſacred mines of ſcripture be digged yet deeper than ever, and

"the hidden riches thereof be brought out of their long obſcurity, to adorn the "doctrine of God our Saviour! O that theſe dark and ſtormy days of party "and prejudice were rolled away, that men would once give leave to their fel- "low Chriſtians to ſpell out and read ſome ancient and unknown glories of the "perſon of Chriſt, which are contained in ſcripture, and to unfold ſome hidden "wonders of his goſpel, the wiſeſt of men know yet but in part, and it is always "poſſible to grow wiſer, at leaſt on this ſide heaven; but public prejudice is a "friend to darkneſs, nor could ignorance and error, without this ſhield, have de- "fended their thrones ſo long among creatures of reaſon, under the light of di- "vine ſun-beams *."

We ſee how this good man laments the unhappy effects of bigotry among profeſſing Chriſtians, as ſecuring the continued reign of ignorance. From the hints thrown out by many authors, it is pretty clear the reſtoration had not eſcaped their notice; but they were deterred from giving a more explicit declaration of their ſentiments, on a ſubject ſo glorifying to God, and intereſting to mankind, by the ſcorching flames of bigotry and blind zeal. It requires no ſmall degree of fortitude and reſolution to encounter theſe, and riſe ſuperior to them in the cauſe of truth.—It is time heavenly truth ſhould be allowed to addreſs the children of men in the native, undiſguiſed garb with which her Father hath attired her; and not in the borrowed, meretricious charms in which it has pleaſed the wiſdom of man to array her. What the poet ſays of lovelineſs, juſtly applies to truth; it

Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is, when unadorn'd, adorn'd the moſt.

Would any one that reads the following lines, if not fettered by ſyſtem, believe that Jehovah, who is love itſelf, ſhall eternally torment countleſs millions of his creatures, whom he calls, and ſo long treats as his offspring?

Good unto all men is the Lord,
O'er all his works his mercy is.
Thee all thy works ſhall praiſe afford;
Thy ſaints, O Lord, thy name ſhall bleſs. Pſal. cxlv. 9, 10.

The ancient church, confeſſing her guilt to God, and deprecating the judgments procured by their ſins, points out the great object of theſe judgments; "Thou

* In connection with the above, let any one read the following extract, and ſay if that learned and pious writer did not ſee cauſe to believe the reſtoration, tho' the prevailing ſpirit of bigotry, of which he ſo juſtly complains, prevented a more open avowal of it.

"If the bleſſed God ſhould at any time, in conſiſtence with his glorious and incomprehenſible perfections, releaſe theſe wretched creatures from their acute pain and long impriſonment in hell, I think I ought chearfully and joyfully to accept of this appointment of God for the good of millions of my fellow creatures, and add my joys and praiſes to all the ſongs and triumphs of the heavenly world, in the day of ſuch a divine and glorious releaſe of priſoners.

"The ways, indeed, of the great God, and his thoughts, are far above our thoughts and our ways, as the heavens are above the earth, yet I muſt reſt and acquieſce where our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father's chief miniſter, both of his wrath and of his love, has left me in his divine revelation of ſcripture, and am conſtrained, therefore, to leave thoſe unhappy creatures under the chains of everlaſting darkneſs, into which they have caſt themſelves by their wilful iniquities, till the bleſſed God ſhall ſee fit to releaſe them: this would indeed be ſuch a new, ſuch an aſtoniſhing and univerſal jubilee, both for devils and wicked men, as muſt fill heaven, earth, and hell, with hallelujahs of joy." *Dr Watt's Preface to vol. ii. of The World to Come.*

haſt *conſumed* us becauſe of our iniquities,"—or, as in the margin, "*melted* us becauſe of our iniquities," Iſa. lxiv. 7. What is the object or deſign of melting precious metal in a furnace? Is it not to ſeparate from it the droſs, and to fit it for certain valuable purpoſes, worthy of the wiſdom, character, and profeſſion of the artiſt? Why ſhould we exclude this then from any part of the divine adminiſtration? for God has one uniform end in view in all his works, and they that repreſent this as various and changing, give a very imperfect and mutilated view of his glorious procedure, and merciful deſign.

I ſhall but once more trouble you, in this correſpondence, that I may give you a conciſe view of the change of ſentiment, produced by the doctrine of the reſtoration, whence the oracles of truth appear to me to harmonize with themſelves, and with the unbiaſſed dictates of that reaſon and underſtanding which God has given us. Tho' this may in general be gathered from theſe letters; yet a ſhort, connected view of the whole may be of ſervice.—May we be enabled, my dear Sir, in all things to follow him who is the *light of the world*, and in following him, not be left to walk in darkneſs, but bleſſed with the directing and transforming light of life! Such is the prayer of your cordial friend, for you, and all men, &c.

LETTER XX.

I was afraid, and durſt not ſhew you mine opinion. But there is a ſpirit in man: and the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth them underſtanding. Great men are not always wiſe: neither do the aged underſtand judgment. Therefore I ſaid, Hearken to me, I alſo will ſhew mine opinion. Be ready to give a reaſon of the hope that is in you. Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of my words, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation. Job xxxii. 6, 8, 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 15. Mark viii. 38 Luke ix. 26. Rom. x. 10.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE no doubt felt, in common with many others, the influence of that fear, or undue deference to the judgment of great, good and pious men, which Elihu tells us, deterred him, for a time, from declaring his opinion in a certain caſe. But reflecting that God intruſts a talent to every man, which he commands him to occupy till his Maſter come to require an account; alſo that he forbids us to ſhew any ſuch deference to any man, or claſs of men whatever, or to call them maſter in that reſpect, an honour due to Chriſt alone; I was led to ſearch the ſcriptures for myſelf, without making the wiſdom of man my interpreter. I hope, I was enabled to do this in the fear of the Lord, with a ſingle eye to his glory, and a cordial love to truth, as the moſt valuable of all treaſures. In the courſe of this correſpondence, you have ſeen in part the reſult. Before *the increaſing* beams of celeſtial light, my prejudices gradually evaniſhed, and *the growing* evidence and force of truth, at leaſt what appeared ſo to me, con-

ſtrained my aſſent to a doctrine, which claims the love and admiration of all men. In proportion as my view of the ſubject expanded, by reſearches into the ſacred oracles, accompanied with daily prayer to God for light and direction, in an inquiry of ſuch importance, my mind came to be eſtabliſhed in the belief of what approved itſelf to me, upon ſuch ſearch, as divine truth, and my heart has been often conſoled with the glorious proſpect it preſents. Viewing the doctrine of the reſtoration as a candle which the Lord lighted within me, I felt myſelf bound, in duty to God, to fellow-men, and to my own ſoul, not to conceal it under a buſhel, whatever I might ſuffer by the diſcovery. Led to view the common doctrine as a libel on God's character and adminiſtration; as giving the lie to his promiſes and oath; and productive of the moſt pernicious conſequences to the intereſt of true religion, I found myſelf called to bear my feeble teſtimony againſt it, whether fellow-men will hear or forbear. Thus am I led to give them my opinion, and ſome of the reaſons on which it is founded, as they have occurred to me in examining the volume of divine truth; leaving it with God to ſucceed the whole, as ſhall ſeem good in his ſight.—The ſcriptures of truth may not unaptly be compared to Mary's box of precious ointment. It is neceſſary the box ſhould be opened, in order to the diffuſion of the ſacred fragrance: and it is by that anointing Chriſt's myſtical as well as his natural body, is prepared for paſſing thro' the valley of death to the regions of light and immortality, and the very memory of each member rendered ſavoury. Diſciples may be filled with indignation at the opening of that box, murmur againſt the action, and count it waſte; but the Lord will defend whatever tends to his honour, and we ſhould not be deterred by the cenſures of men; but much better that even a woman ſhould break open this box, then that the ſavour of its ſweet ointment ſhould be ſmothered.

At the cloſe of my laſt I told you what I meant to compriſe in this concluding part of this correſpondence. In the ſhort view I here intend of the ſcheme of the reſtoration, you will not expect references to paſſages of ſcripture, on which I found it, having done this in a good meaſure already; as this would extend beyond the bounds of one letter.—That God has choſen a certain number of mankind, according to the election of his grace, I firmly believe; but then view this election, like every other of which we read in ſcripture, as intended for the good of their non-elected brethren, and not their excluſion from holineſs and happineſs. The object of this peculiar election is clearly enough pointed out in ſcripture. The elect are called, by way of eminence, the ſaints of the Moſt High; and their perſeverance, in a ſtate of grace and holineſs, till they attain the end of their faith, even the ſalvation of their precious ſouls, aſcertained by many gracious promiſes, &c. The election of grace, ſo far from interfering with the reſtoration, hath a particular reference to it; for it is only when the reſtitution of all things ſhall commence, that the ſaints of the Moſt High ſhall enter on the full exerciſe of their kingly and prieſtly offices;—offices that plainly import that there are ſome over whom they are to preſide, and among whom they are to officiate.

As the election does not hinder the future reſtoration, but is a pledge of it,

and a mean appointed for its accompliſhment; ſo neither, in my opinion, is it a bar to the acceſſion of others to the houſehold of faith on earth, but rather intended to ſerve as the ſalt of the earth, and the mean of preſerving light in this dark world. The election hath a reſpect to the filling of certain offices in future, and hath important privileges annexed to it; but is not the ſalvation of church members conſiſtent with the ſalvation of the office-bearers among them? or does the latter exclude the former? To me it appears, from Paul's reaſoning, that even the non-elect may riſe to the high honour of the elect, by the diligent improvement of the gifts and graces which God has given them; whence, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, they purge themſelves from the wooden and earthen veſſels of diſhonour, and ſo become veſſels of honour, ſanctified, and meet for the Maſter's uſe. This bleſſed privilege, I humbly think, lies open to all; tho', alas! too few aſpire to it. Among the ſaints there ſhall be a diverſity of glory; yet all are exhorted to ſeek the higheſt meaſure of grace, as leading to the greateſt glory. So all to whom the word of ſalvation is ſent, are exhorted to believe and obey it; tho' it is manifeſt all are not elect. Thus all are encouraged, and the preſumptuous hope of hypocrites receives a due check. Tho' the election will attain, yet others may fall away, after taſting of the good word of God, and feeling the powers of the world to come. In this view, God may ſuſpend their enjoyment of the promiſed bleſſing, as he did the continuance of the kingdom in the family of Saul; a ſolemn warning to thoſe who think they ſtand on the rock of election, ſo as not to be moved, to take heed leſt they fall. I ſhall mention only two conſiderations that weigh with me not a little on this head. The young man of fortune who applied to our Lord, wiſhing to know what good thing he might do that he might inherit eternal life, does not appear to have been one of the elect. Yet our Lord promiſed him treaſure in heaven, upon certain conditions within his power to comply with; and he ſurely promiſed nothing that he was not able and willing to beſtow. The other is the caſe of the ſervant to whom his Lord forgave a thouſand talents, becauſe he humbly craved mercy, and had nothing to pay; yet upon his future baſe and unworthy conduct towards his fellow ſervant, his Lord retracted the pardon.—Will any one ſay that there is nothing like this exemplified under the divine government? If there is not, what end could our Lord have in propoſing ſuch things? In this view I am not ſingular; for ſome of the moſt ſtrenuous Calviniſts have adopted the ſame ſentiment.

I recollect to have met with it many years ago, in a work entitled *Veritas Redux*, written by a Mr Edwards of the Church of England, well known by his various writings. The author, after eſtabliſhing the Calviniſtic tenets, in oppoſition to the Arminian points, yields ſo far to the force of truth urged on the other ſide, as to grant that others beſides the elect may obtain grace which ſhall iſſue in their ſalvation. Not having the book juſt now at command, I cannot point out the place where you may find this; yet am I certain the ſentiment is clearly expreſſed in the above work, and ſome reaſons aſſigned for it. The famous Milton, the juſtneſs of whoſe ſentiments in divinity *has been as generally* admitted, as his talents as a poet have been admired, con-

veys the ſame view in the following lines, which I beg leave to tranſcribe from Book III. of his Paradiſe Loſt.

" Some I have choſen of peculiar grace
Elect above the reſt; ſo is my will:
The reſt ſhall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
Their ſinful ſtate, and to *obey* betimes
Th' incenſed Deity, while offer'd grace
Invites; for I will clear their ſenſes dark,
What may ſuffice, and ſoften ſtonny hearts
To pray'r, repentance, and obedience due,
Tho' but endeavour'd with ſincere intent,
Mine ear ſhall not be ſlow, mine eyes not ſhut.
And I will place within them as a guide
My umpire conſcience, whom if they will hear,
Light after light well us'd they ſhall attain,
And to the end perſiſting, ſafe arrive." B. iij. l. 183.

In what follows the poet points out the abuſe of this privilege as the only thing that excludes from mercy, and produces the moſt fatal conſequences. Upon the reſtoration ſcheme this alſo holds; for the conſequence of ſuch abuſe will be alarming and irreparable. Viewing the matter in the above light, with what propriety may we adopt what the poet ſays in a preceding part of the ſame book, with reference to the reſtoration?

" Divine compaſſion viſibly appears,
Love without end, and without meaſure grace,
And mercy firſt and laſt ſhall brighteſt ſhine."

Milton ſpeaks of the Redeemer in ſuch terms as would lead us to think he believed the reſtoration, an inſtance of which occurs in the following lines:— The heavenly hoſts are introduced as thus addreſſing the Almighty Father;

——————" Juſt are thy ways,
Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works;
Who can extenuate Thee? Next, to the Son,
Deſtin'd Reſtorer of mankind, by whom
New heav'n and earth ſhall to the ages riſe,
Or down from Heav'n deſcend." B. x l. 643.

Compared to the above view of God's conduct towards thoſe who enjoy the goſpel, what is the figment of the common grace or influences of the Spirit, which the received doctrine repreſents God as giving to the non-elect, during what is called their day of grace, not to ſave them, for this is not pretended even in one ſingle inſtance, but to render them inexcuſeable, and ſo enhance their guilt and miſery! Is this like the Father of mercies and the God of love? Does he do any thing in vain? but this would be acting worſe than in vain—doing good that evil might come out of it. To what purpoſe ſay that men have a day of grace or ſalvation, who are ſuppoſed to be placed in circumſtances that render their ſalvation utterly impoſſible, and conſequently, their damnation abſolutely

certain? however much they may be at times moved under the word, &c. by the common influences of the Spirit?

As the houſe mortgaged in the walled city, the figure of the church, if not redeemed within the year, could not be recovered by the original proprietor, or his family, in the jubilee, Lev. xxv. 30; ſo every one that has acceſs to hear the goſpel, if not improved to ſalvation during the period of this life, will, like Eſau, the type of ſuch prophane perſons, be eternally excluded from the peculiar privileges of the church of the firſt-born. Whether any of this deſcription may be recovered during the intermediate period between their death and reſurrection, ſo as to have their names in the Lamb's book of life at the day of judgment, tho' not enrolled among the elect, I will not take upon me to ſay. But tho' the thought ſtartled me at firſt, when it occurred in ſome authors on the reſtoration, as it may alſo my Friend, I think it not unreaſonable to admit, that many who have departed this life without enjoying the goſpel, may be brought, before the cloſe of the preſent diſpenſation, to have an intereſt in its bleſſings, ſome, perhaps many of them in the character even of the elect. God is no reſpecter of perſons, and if nothing of this nature take place, the whole heathen world in every age muſt be conſigned over to the ſecond death, and none of them numbered among the elect, which would be making circumſtances, not in their power, to cut them off entirely from all poſſibility of ſharing the honours of the ſaints of the Moſt High. But we read that there are laſt who ſhall be firſt; and that many ſhall come from the eaſt and the weſt, the north and the ſouth, and ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, when the children of the kingdom ſhall be thruſt out; which ſeems to me to ſay that ſuch did not enjoy the privileges of the goſpel in this ſtate. But I only hint theſe things, not preſuming to ſay any thing deciſive upon them; it ſufficing that the Judge of all the earth will do right. One thing however is certain, that as our Lord is appointed heir of *all* things, and foretold to inherit *all* nations, ſo we may reſt aſſured he will actually poſſeſs and enjoy his own; yet the time and manner of his ſo doing hath he put in his own power.

The millennium, ſhadowed forth by the ſabbatical year, and other ſacred periods of the Moſaic economy, will be a glorious æra of the Meſſiah's reign. This is the ſubject of frequent prophecy, and many glorious things are ſaid of it in ſcripture. I am perſuaded, however, that many predictions are referred to this period, which will receive their full completion only during the age of ages, or the laſt and moſt glorious and extenſive period of Meſſiah's adminiſtration. Whether the millennium will conſiſt of a thouſand calendar or prophetical years, I pretend not to determine: Nor do I find myſelf qualified to ſay whether the firſt reſurrection, and the reign of the ſaints with Chriſt during the thouſand years, are to be underſtood literally, or only in ſuch a metaphorical and ſpiritual ſenſe as entirely excludes the literal; having as yet examined only the one ſide of that important queſtion. Upon more cool inquiry into the ſubject, however, I ſee no reaſon from ſcripture to believe that the whole world ſhall be Chriſtianized *during that period*, as ſome think, but only that all nations of the earth ſhall

be viſited by the goſpel, to take out of them a people prepared for the Lord. The recovery of the Jews to their ancient land, and alſo to the privileges of the goſpel, ſeems to be placed beyond doubt in ſcripture. The late pious and laborious Mr Brown of Haddington, gives a collection of ſcripture texts or prophecies in proof of this, under the following heads, at the end of his ſelf-interpreting Bible.

"I. The Jews ſhall be gathered from all parts of the earth where they are now ſcattered, and brought home into their own land. II. They ſhall be carried by the Gentiles unto their place, who ſhall join themſelves with the Jews, and become the Lord's people.—III. Great miracles ſhall be wrought when Iſrael is reſtored, as formerly when they were brought out of Egypt, viz. 1. Drying up the river Euphrates. 2. Cauſing rivers to flow in deſert places. 3. Giving them prophets. 4. The Lord Chriſt himſelf ſhall appear at the head of them.—IV. The Jews being reſtored, and converted to the faith of Chriſt, ſhall be formed into a ſtate, and have judges and counſellors over them as formerly; the Lord Chriſt himſelf being their king, who ſhall alſo be acknowledged king over all the earth.—V. They ſhall have the victory over all their enemies, and all kings and nations of the earth ſhall ſubmit unto them.—VI. The Jews reſtored ſhall live peaceably, without being divided into two nations, or contending with one another any more. 1. They ſhall be very numerous, and multiply greatly. 2. They ſhall have great peace, ſafety, and outward temporal proſperity. 3. They ſhall be very glorious, and a bleſſing in the whole earth.—VII. The land of Judea ſhall be made eminently fruitful, like a paradiſe, or the garden of God.—VIII. Jeruſalem ſhall be rebuilt, and after the full reſtoration of the Jews, ſhall never be deſtroyed, nor infeſted with enemies any more.—IX. A little before the time of the Jews call and converſion, there ſhall be great wars, confuſion, and deſolation, throughout all the earth; ſo that we may ſay, as Balaam did, propheſying of this very time, *Alas! who ſhall live when God doth this?*" Num. xxiv. 23.

One is led to think, that Mr B. believed the perſonal reign of Meſſiah on earth, during the millenium; for he tells us, That he ſhall then appear at the head of the Jews as their king, and be alſo acknowledged as king over all the earth. I am led to think that ſome of the paſſages adduced in proof of ſome of the above things, rather refer to the New Jeruſalem ſtate, when the new heavens and the new earth ſhall be created, as the abode of righteouſneſs and felicity. Thoſe who view the day of judgment as terminating Meſſiah's adminiſtration, and introducing a two-fold never-ending ſtate of conſummate happineſs, and extreme miſery, are driven into this miſtake, in order to account for the accompliſhment of many ſcripture predictions. Thus, in my miſſionary ſermon, publiſhed ſome years ago, on Meſſiah's *glorious reſt*, Iſa. xi. 10. I now ſee that I went into the ſame error, by crouding into the millennium all the glorious things I found predicted reſpecting that reſt; many of which belong to the diſpenſation of the ages of ages, or the for ever and ever. The moſt judicious commentators are agreed that the ſeptenary, or ſeventh thouſand year of the world, will be the millennium, predicted by John, Rev. xx. There is ſuch

foretold the ſubſequent events of the looſing of Satan,—the levying of the vaſt army of Gog and Magog,—their hoſtile attempt on the beloved city, the millennial Jeruſalem, and the camp of the ſaints,—their ſeaſonable and miraculous deſtruction by fire from heaven,—the reſurrection of the reſt of the dead,—the final judgment, and the execution of the final ſentence upon all that are not then found written in the Lamb's book of life; who ſhall be adjudged to the lake of fire, and there ſubjected to the power of that king of terrors, the awful ſecond death. That this earth, when melted down into one extended firey lake, by the powerful operation of the elementary fire, which ſhall then ſeize the whole viſible frame of nature, cauſing a moſt dreadful craſhing noiſe, ſhall prove the very lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, I take it not upon me to determine. This opinion has been embraced by many, and nothing occurs to me in ſcripture that can overturn it. The conflagration of this viſible frame, which will continue till all the groſs matter of this globe is conſumed, muſt, in the nature of the thing, be a proceſs, we ſhould think, of very long duration. Now commences what is called by Paul the *eternal judgment*, Heb. vi. 2. and the *everlaſting deſtruction* from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, or his glorious power, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. Thoſe who make light of limited puniſhment, if unhappily ſubjected to this miſery, will ſoon change their impious ſentiment; and that this will be the dreadful lot of the great maſs of profeſſed Chriſtians in every age, that mixed multitude, is too clear from ſcripture, to admit of a moment's doubt.

The place of miſery is called a *great furnace of fire*, which will be ſeven times heated to hypocrites and formal profeſſors, to all who had the light of divine truth within their reach, and yet know not God, and obeyed not the goſpel; and the materials to be conſumed in this furnace are plainly ſpecified in the word of truth. Into this ſtate ſhall the wicked be turned, and all the nations that forget God, there to remain, reaping as they have ſown, throughout a duration known to God alone. If three days in the belly of the fiſh ſeemed to Jonah an eternity, will not this be felt, in the experience of the wretched ſufferers, an eternity indeed? While left here to weep, and wail, and gnaſh their teeth, through anguiſh, remorſe, bitter ſelf-reflection and deſpair, having a heart-overwhelming ſenſe of what they have loſt, alſo of the miſery they have incurred, and of the felicity of the righteous; theſe will aſcend with Jeſus to the higheſt heaven, to repoſſeſs in their complete glorified perſons the New Jeruſalem, when their Shepherd, Lord and King, ſhall preſent them all as a chaſte virgin, without ſpot, wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, before the throne of God. This is the kingdom of the firſt-fruits of God's creatures, and of the church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven—the holy nation, and peculiar people, of kings and prieſts to God and the Lamb.

The view given of all this does not materially differ from what is generally deemed orthodox. But as our Lord has much work yet to perform before he deliver up his kingdom, or its mediatory adminiſtration to the Father, at an after period, the diſtance to which God only knows, that glorious community will deſcend, in their beloved city, the New Jeruſalem, from God out of heaven, like

a bride adorned and prepared for her huſband, Rev. xxi. 2. The grand object of this deſcent is plainly marked out in the context; and ſummed up in making *all* things new, or, as Peter expreſſes it, the reſtitution of *all* things. I have elſewhere aſſigned ſome reaſons to ſhew that this ſtate cannot intend the millennium, to which many would reſtrict it; and ſeveral others might be brought in proof of this from the ſacred text. That it intends not the ſtate of abſolute bliſs in the higheſt heaven, is equally obvious from the deſcription given of it; for it is repreſented as deſcending thence, and as tabernacling with men, &c. That it cannot mean any ordinary ſtate of the church, is clear from the view given of its tranſcendent glory and felicity. The millennial Jeruſalem, as deſcribed by Ezekiel, chap. xlviii. is to be about ten miles ſquare, or forty in circumference, with a temple attached to it at ſome diſtance, about a mile ſquare; but the Jeruſalem that is to deſcend from above to the new earth, is to be fifteen hundred miles ſquare, or ſix thouſand in circumference, and to have no temple,—a circumſtance ſufficient to ſhew that Rev. xxi. does not refer to the millennium, but to a ſtate quite diſtinct from it, and unſpeakably more glorious. You will find it clearly proved that it cannot mean the heavenly ſtate, in Dr Johnſton of Holywood's comment on the paſſage. However much I venerate the Doctor's character and abilities, I cannot admit that he has ſucceeded ſo well in proving it to be the millennium. I ſhall give only one reaſon of many that ſtruck my mind in peruſing him, and which appears to me ſufficient to ſettle the point. He thinks that the new heaven ſpoken of by John, means the improved ſtate of the church during the millennium, and the new earth, the improved ſtate of the political condition of mankind. He is led to this view, by conſidering the term *earth* all along in the prophecy as the ſymbol of the Roman empire; but that ſymbol appears to me inapplicable to the period of the new earth. Had the Doctor recollected, in addition to the reaſons given above, what the Lord ſaith of the new earth, Iſa. lxvi. 22. he would not, I am perſuaded, give ſuch a ſenſe of it *. "For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make, ſhall remain before me, ſaith the Lord, ſo ſhall your ſeed and your name remain." Will any improved ſtate of the kingdoms of the earth endure before God to all eternity, or as long as the ſeed and the name of the church of the firſt-born ſhall remain? Will not the day of judgment, and the conflagration of the earth put an end to all the political inſtitutions of mankind, and the outward proſperity of all its ſtates and kingdoms? whence they cannot remain always before God. The Doctor thinks the account of the millennium in the 20th chapter, only reſumed and enlarged in the two following; but thoſe who believe the reſtoration maintain, and I think with juſtice, that in the 21ſt, and part of the 22d, we have a

* What this worthy author ſays of the treatment of the witneſs, on Rev. xi. 3. every one will more or leſs experience who venture to plead the cauſe of truth beyond what cuſtom and public opinion may ſanction. "By thoſe perſons intereſted in a contrary deciſion, and by the great multitude who in moſt caſes form opinions without examining the caſe, and deliver theſe with that confidence for which their ignorance only hinders them to bluſh, they are ſometimes repreſented as ignorant fools, and ſometimes as artful and perjured knaves. It is not reaſon, a ſound judgment, and a well informed underſtanding, which make men take the wrong ſide in any caſe; but it is prejudice, private intereſt, or paſſion, and in many caſes, all the three; and theſe never fail to make them *rail againſt* and miſrepreſent all who take the oppoſite ſide."

viſion that refers to a quite diſtinct ſtate of the church, which will correſpond to the Jubilee, as the millennium will to the Sabbatical year. From the 7th verſe to the end of the book, we have general things, that have a retroſpect to the preſent ſtate and diſpenſation.

By the new heavens I underſtand the viſible heavens to be intended, when purified by the general fire, and formed anew by the Creator for ſome noble purpoſe; and by the new earth, this terreſtial globe, after the conflagration ſhall ceaſe, and it ſhall be again created by the power of God, or formed into a fit habitation for holy and happy beings. Mr Brown, in his reflections upon 2 Pet. chap. iii. has this remark, "Bleſſed is the change which ſhall then be made in the purification of our lower world, and in forming out of its aſhes new heavens and a new earth, for the everlaſting happineſs of ranſomed men."—Here is another clear proof that the millennium cannot be intended in the two laſt chapters of the book of Revelation; for the conflagration which ſucceeds the laſt judgment, muſt be over before the new heavens and the new earth be created. The church of the firſt-born is alſo repreſented as completed, and glorified; and yet tears, even all tears, are to be wiped away from their eyes after this; and pain, ſorrow, crying, death, and old things to paſs away, and all things to be made new; and the leaves of the tree of life are then to be for the healing or ſalvation of the nations. What nations need theſe things then?

Peter tells us that in the new earth righteouſneſs ſhall dwell; that is, righteous beings. But the portion of the ſaints is the inheritance of the ſaints in light, in the heaven of heavens, which is God's peculiar abode; while he gives the renovated earth to thoſe who are called the children of men, as diſtinguiſhed from the firſt-born, the children of God. In the firſt inſtance, Chriſt as heir of all things, is heir of this earth, and his ſaints in him; but the younger brethren ſhall poſſeſs it, in virtue of their near relation to theſe heirs of God, who have a far ſuperior inheritance.—This glorious and concluding period of Meſſiah's reign, in which he will finiſh the whole work given him to do, is called the age of ages, and ſometimes the ages of ages, or for ever and ever, to denote their long ſucceſſive duration, their connection with all the preceding ages, and the confirmation of the work begun in this more glorious and important ſtate. Of whatever length the millennium may be, this will meaſure ſeven times its duration; making the proportion that the Jubilee bare to the Sabbatical year, our rule. The xxvth of Leviticus furniſhes a key to ſome of the leading privileges of this ſtate; as does alſo Solomon's peaceful and proſperous reign of forty years, which was intended to prefigure it. In the diſtinction obſerved by that prince between his natural ſubjects, and foreigners, employing the former only as overſeers or ſuperintendants of his public works, and the latter as labourers and artiſts, points out the diſtinction betwixt the elect, and the reſtored nations. The univerſal homage paid to Solomon, his glory, wiſdom, riches, and the finiſhing of his magnificent temple, are all ſo many figures of the nature, glory and work of Meſſiah's peaceful reign, or glorious reſt. I cannot expreſs the joy the contemplation of the above things once gave me; but upon the common ſyſtem the beauty, glory, and fulneſs of many of the ancient types are quite loſt, or obſcured

and curtailed. On theſe things I drop only a few hints, leaving the reſt to your own reflections.

Tho' with the commencement of this grand era, the deliverance of the wretched captives of the ſecond death will commence alſo; yet from Rev. xiv. 11. xx. 10. it would appear that certain characters will be continued under torment throughout the ages of that vaſt duration. Let thoſe who ſtand all the day of ſalvation idle, or worſe than idle, in the market place, hear this and tremble, leſt they ſhould be numbered with ſuch tranſgreſſors. Their miſery will then become more intenſe than ever, to learn that ſo many of their brethren are reſtored, and made happy, and that they themſelves are yet held in chains of darkneſs, miſery and deſpair. But before Chriſt deliver up the kingdom, he will ſubdue all to himſelf, or overcome the moral and penal evil of his creatures with his goodneſs and power. Then mankind, from firſt to laſt, will celebrate a glorious jubilee to the Lord, while countleſs myriads of happy ſpirits ſhall witneſs the feſtivity of the ſolemn ſcene. It is only in this ſtate, ſo far as I can ſee, that the grand prophecy in the viith of Daniel, ver. 18,—27. and ſimilar intimations in ſcripture, ſhall be fully accompliſhed. Proper eternity, with regard to creatures, will not begin, till the times of reſtitution, or the ages of ages come to an end. The Bible is the hiſtory of time, but does not diſcloſe what preceded or ſucceeds it. It is enough, when time ſhall be no more, God ſhall be all in all. The reſtitution of all things effected, the righteous, or the church of the firſt-born, will reaſcend in the New Jeruſalem, with their triumphant Lord, to the higheſt heavens, there to enjoy the inheritance of the ſaints in light in the kingdom of their Father, when God ſhall be *all in all*. I do not however ſuppoſe that this will break off that friendly intercourſe, ſo happily begun, and will probably be continued with intermiſſions, without end. As in paradiſe, our firſt parents enjoyed the viſits of angels, and of Meſſiah; ſo in this felicitating ſtate, the bond of brotherly union, already knit and endeared by ſo many labours of love, will remain inviolate to all eternity. The ſtate in which Adam was formed, and his enjoyments in it, may give us ſome idea of the ſuperior felicity of this ſtate. What eternal praiſe ſhall thence acrue to the great Reſtorer of mankind! Will not ſuch an arrangement manifeſt God to be love itſelf?

Here the inquiſitive mind will ſtart a number of queſtions, which that day only ſhall declare. What will become of the inferior creatures? will ſome aſk. Their Creator knows how to diſpoſe of them. I am led to think, that as man in innocence received the homage of the inferior creatures; ſo when he is reſtored to his allegiance, theſe will, in their different way, own him as their lord. If God provided for the ſafety of the terreſtrial animals in the ark during the deluge of water, he can, if he pleaſe, provide a place of ſafety for thoſe that are found alive at the cloſe of the preſent ſyſtem, till the flood of fire ſhall have ſpent its rage. But let every man think of this as he pleaſes, with me it is no point of faith; tho' I think there is ſome reaſon to ſuppoſe the benevolent Creator will not deſtroy all the links in the chain of creation, that is ſubordinate to man; as this would leſſen the manifold variety of his works, and circumſcribe the communication of his bounty.

Among the many advantages of ranking with the firſt-born, or being made partakers of the eternal glory, this, in my opinion is a diſtinguiſhed one; that they ſhall poſſeſs ſpiritual bodies, filled with refulgent light, like Chriſt's glorified body, and no longer ſubject to the laws of gravitation, but capable of being tranſported, by an act of volition, with the ſpeed of an angel, from one region of the univerſe to another. Is not this privilege of itſelf worthy of ambition? In this the reſtored part of mankind, in my opinion, will not ſhare, Adam, in his primeval ſtate, poſſeſſing no ſuch pre-eminence, and reſtitution importing only a bringing back to ſomething formerly poſſeſſed. Tho' their bodies will poſſeſs unfading vigour and beauty, and be no more liable to diſeaſe or death, yet I do think they will need clothing, and be nouriſhed by the fruits of the earth, which will then poſſeſs a moſt delicious and nutritive quality; when the whole earth ſhall be like the garden of Eden. Neither ſcorching beams, nor chilling blaſts ſhall infeſt their habitation; and the new heavens from on high ſhall ſhed upon them their benign influences. What a happy ſtate of Society, when mankind ſhall enjoy all things in common, without the trouble of gathering into ſtore-houſe or barn; when their time ſhall be ſpent between acts of elevated devotion, and the conſtant intercourſe of refined friendſhip and brotherly love! To this happy ſtate of things many paſſages of ſcripture appear to me evidently to refer; and it is only in this ſtate that the will of God ſhall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.—Compared with the common one, is not this a view of creation worthy of its Author to realize? What a glorious iſſue of his works! Is not this God worthy of the love of all men? And will not the final reſult of his grand proceſs manifeſt that he loves all men, and that it is not of him that ſo many of them periſh?

I leave yourſelf to examine theſe things by the light of reaſon and ſcripture, my intended brevity on this part of the ſubject not permitting me to adduce arguments from either. There are two important points, on which I have not yet touched, but upon which you would probably wiſh to learn my ſentiments; I mean our Lord's deſcent to hell after his death, and the object of it; and alſo what we may gather from ſcripture reſpecting the final ſtate of fallen angels. On theſe two points I can only hint at particulars, having already extended this communication much beyond what I at firſt propoſed to myſelf. As theſe points are ſo connected with the ſubject, and the diſcuſſion of them ſo much calculated to complete the argument, I could not think of diſmiſſing the ſubject without allowing them ſome conſideration.

That ancient production called the Apoſtles Creed, ſpeaks of our Lord's deſcent to hell or *hades*, as a diſtinct thing from his burying; and the third article of the Church of England tells us, that it ought to be believed that he actually deſcended thither. Men of the greateſt celebrity for piety and learning, both in ancient and modern times, have embraced and defended this opinion. Tho' the creed was compoſed, in all probability, long after the apoſtles days; yet does it appear, from King's hiſtory of it, and other works, that it is of ancient date, and contains in that article what appears to have been univerſally *received among Chriſtians* from the earlieſt times. The prayer contained in the

16th Pſalm gives weight to this opinion: "For thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee corruption." The laſt clauſe expreſſes his firm belief of a ſpeedy reſurrection; and the firſt that his Father would not permit his ſeparate ſpirit or ſoul to remain long in that doleful region called hell, where he himſelf repreſented Dives in a ſtate of torment. From our Lord's anſwer to the penitent thief, it is evident that he viſited paradiſe in his diſembodied ſtate; but did his ſoul remain there during the whole time of its ſeparation from his body. I ſee not where the extraordinary effort of his faith and hope would be, that his Father would not leave his ſoul in hell, if no more was meant by it than paradiſe, or the ſtate of the dead in general, as it is repreſented Jonah in the belly of the fiſh was a type of our Lord in the ſtate of the dead. He calls that ſtate the heart of the earth, which would not apply to his tomb. The phraſe, *the lower parts of the earth*, Pſalm lxiii. 9. Iſa. xliv. 23. Eph. iv. 9. is employed to denote the ſeparate ſtate of wicked men. When Jonah was carried down to the bottom of the ocean, which he calls the *belly of hell*, and his ſoul was filled with fearful apprehenſions, ſurely his ſtate was a more proper figure of our Lord's righteous ſoul heaving the impaſſible gulf, and paſſing thro' the dreary region of the damned, than of his body which lay inſenſible in the grave, Jonah ii. 2. v. 6. In the 88th Pſalm, which is allowed to be predictive of his ſufferings, we hear him bemoaning himſelf thus, "Thou haſt laid me in the loweſt pit, in darkneſs, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard on me, and thou haſt afflicted me with all thy waves." In the 116th Pſalm, he diſtinguiſhes the pains of hell from the ſorrows of death; "The ſorrows of death compaſſed me, and the pains of hell gat hold of me: I found trouble and ſorrow." And in the 18th Pſalm, ver. 4, 5. he makes the ſame diſtinction, only mentions death twice, the latter probably intending what his ſoul endured in that ſtate. "The ſorrows of death compaſſed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid," or of *Belial*, as on margin. "The ſorrows (or *cords*) of hell compaſſed me about: the ſnares of death prevented me." Some think that the puniſhment of the lake of fire is called the ſecond death, not in alluſion to the death of the body, as is uſually thought, but with reference to the ſtate of miſery into which the ſouls of wicked men enter when ſeparated from the body. This is much more worthy of the name of death than the extinction of animal life, which is common to good and bad men, and to inferior creatures alſo; and may be the very death our Lord intends in the latter clauſe of verſe 5th. This may be alſo the death of which Peter ſpeaks, Acts ii. 24. the pains of which God is ſaid to have looſed, becauſe he could not be held of it. The paſſage in the 16th Pſalm is quoted in the 31ſt verſe.

Thus we ſee our Lord acting like a generous prince, who takes the circuit of his dominions, before he aſſumes the reins of government, that he may ſee in perſon the ſtate of his ſubjects, the better to accommodate the meaſures of his adminiſtration to their neceſſities. He was pleaſed to lodge ſo long in the priſon of the womb—to tarry ſo long in this world, that ſtate of exile—to deſcend in his body to the priſon of the grave, and to aſcend in his ſoul to paradiſe, and

afterwards deſcend to *hades*, hell, or the lower parts of the earth. This makes his work much more arduous than on the common ſyſtem. His object in viſiting theſe regions of horror, anguiſh, and deſpair, Peter tells us, was to preach the goſpel to the priſoners of darkneſs, 1 Pet. iii. 19. This view accords much better with the connection, and the ſcriptures already quoted, than that commonly attached to this paſſage, which makes his going to be by the miniſtry of Noah to preach to the Antedeluvian ſinners, who periſhed in the flood, but were at the time Peter wrote ſpirits in priſon. We do not read of the ſucceſs of Noah; but it is evident from the ſacred text that the preaching here referred to was ſucceſsful; for the objects of it are ſaid to have been *ſometime* diſobedient, a plain intimation that they did not continue ſo when thus favoured. I muſt refer you to Mr Winchester's writings for an explanation of this paſſage, as alſo of the 6th verſe of the following chapter, which refers to the ſame ſubject. Though our Lord's firſt deſcent to that abode might be dolorous, and his human feelings might be deeply affected in witneſſing ſuch ſcenes of wo, ſo as to unfit him then for preaching to the unhappy ſpirits; yet during the ſix weeks between his reſurrection and aſcenſion, ſuch benevolent viſits might be repeated with better ſucceſs. The venerable character mentioned above gives it as his opinion, that our Lord then ſaved all that periſhed in the flood, whoſe abode in miſery by that time was about two thouſand four hundred years. He aſſigns for reaſon why our Lord fixed on them rather than others, becauſe of all others they were the greateſt tranſgreſſors, and in ſaving them he gave the moſt ſignal diſplay of his ſaving power. Another reaſon has occurred to your correſpondent, when reviewing this ſubject. The flood of waters was plainly a figure of that deluge of fire which will effect the perdition of ungodly men. By ſaving all that periſhed in the former, our Lord gave a pattern, pledge, and earneſt of the final recovery of all that ſhall periſh in the latter. He favours us in his Dialogues with a quotation from the pious Biſhop Beveridge on the Thirty-Nine Articles, in proof of the opinion of the Chriſtian fathers upon that important point. Not having the Biſhop's work in my poſſeſſion, tho' I had every reaſon to reſt ſatisfied with the fidelity of the extract, I lately procured, in a public auction, twelve volumes of his writings, in hope of having that tract among them, but was diſappointed. Permit me therefore to tranſcribe what is extracted in the Dialogues, in caſe you have not ſeen it already *.

* The reader will find the paſſage intended in the following note taken from Mr Scarlett's Tranſlation of the New Teſtament, on 1 Pet. iv. 6.

David, prophetically ſpeaking of the reſurrection of Chriſt, ſaith, Pſa xvi. 9, 10. "My fleſh ſhall reſt in hope, for thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hades: *neither*, wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee corruption." That his ſoul ſhould not be left in hades, implied that it ſhould go there, even, as the promiſe that his fleſh ſhould not ſee corruption, implied that his body ſhould die. It is evident there are two ſubjects ſpoken of; and Peter, commenting on the Pſalmiſt's words Acts ii. 29—31. preſerves the ſame idea, by diſtinguiſhing his *ſoul* from his *fleſh*, and *hades* from the *grave*: for his *ſoul* was in *hades*, though it was not left there; and his *fleſh* was in the *grave*, though it ſaw no corruption. If we collect ſome of the paſſages in ſcripture which ſpeak on this ſubject, they give us much information: Paul, writing to the Epheſians iv. 9. "Now this *expreſſion* 'he aſcended,' what is it, but *that he alſo deſcended firſt to the lower parts of the earth?*" To *the Coloſſians, ii.* 15. "Having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he expoſed them as a ſhew in

I view the ſolemn ſcene deſcribed Pſalm 18th, from verſe 6th, as a repreſentation of the cauſe and effects of the earthquake that took place at our Lord's reſurrection, when his ſoul was aſcending from the lower parts of the earth. The pious and learned Biſhop Horne, in his commentary on the book of Pſalms, views it in this light. Referring what is ſaid, verſes 4th and 5th, to our Lord's ſufferings, he adds, on the 7th, this was really the caſe at the reſurrection of our Lord from the dead; when, as the evangeliſts inform us, *there was a great earthquake.*" Our bleſſed Redeemer overcame death in its every form then in exiſtence. In the courſe of his perſonal miniſtry, he delivered ſome of the chief of ſinners from the fetters of ſpiritual death; ſuch as Mary Magdalane, and the poor man out of whom he caſt the legion on the coaſt of Gadara, and alſo the thief upon the croſs. In his life he relieved a few from the bands of natural death, and at his crucifixion the graves were opened, and many bodies of ſaints were revived, and appeared to many in Jeruſalem. Thus he triumphed over death upon his own ground, Golgotha, the place of ſculls. Tho' the graves were opened at our Lord's death, yet is it probable the riſing of ſo many took place only at his own reſurrection; and theſe would grace his triumphant aſcenſion to glory. But this is not all; in his deſcent to the priſon of *hades*, to preach the goſpel to the priſoners there, his triumph over death was ſtill more complete. What a glorious proceſſion when he aſcended on high, leading cap-

public, triumphing over them." Hence it appears, that Chriſt went into the lower parts of the earth, or hades, as a mighty warrior and triumphant conqueror. He purſued his enemies to their laſt retreat, and defeated them, by freeing thoſe whom they held in captivity; agreeable to David's prophecy, Pſal. lxviii. 18. and Paul's aſſertion, "Having aſcended on high, he led captivity captive." Eph. iv. 8.

By this paſſage in Peter, we learn ſeveral important things: Firſt, the *time* when Chriſt preached to the ſpirits in priſon; it was after his death, "*being put to death in the fleſh, but raiſed up to life by the ſpirit, by which HE WENT.*" Secondly, the *ſtate* in which he went, was that ſtate or kind of life he took up, or poſſeſſed himſelf of, called *Spirit*; "*raiſed up to life by the SPIRIT, by which alſo he went and preached.*" Thirdly, the *place, a priſon*; "*He went and preached to thoſe ſpirits in PRISON.*" (The Greek word πορευθεις, he went, imports a journey to ſome diſtant place; it is the ſame word as that uſed in verſe 22, for who is gone into heaven.) Fourthly, the *auditors, ſpirits*; not men in the fleſh, but *SPIRITS IN PRISON*: (they were the ſpirits of the antediluvians, or thoſe who had been diſobedient *when the long ſuffering of God once waited* for their repentance *in the days of*, or by the preaching of *Noah, while an ark was preparing.*) Fifthly, the *ſucceſs, obedience*; it is ſaid, "*they were formerly*, once, ſometime, or of old, *diſobedient*," which intimates that now they were not ſo, Eph. v. 8. But this is not all; the effect or fruit is plainly expreſſed in the latter part of the ſection, "*that they might live according to God*," in that ſtate they were in, "*the SPIRIT, but be judged according to*" what they were formerly, and we are now, "*men in the fleſh.*"

That formulary of faith the Apoſtles Creed ſaith, "dead and buried, he deſcended into hell." The third Article of the Church of England ſays, "As Chriſt died for us, and was buried; ſo alſo it is to be believed that he went down into hell."

The following extracts are from Biſhop Beveridge's Comment on the Thirty-nine Articles. On Article the third, (as above) he ſays, "Though this Article be in itſelf as clear and certain as any of the reſt, yet men having exerciſed their fancies ſo groſſly upon it, have drawn as it were a veil over it, and eclipſed the light of it; and hence it is that ſome do not rightly underſtand it, others ſcruple it, yea and others do in plain terms contradict and gainſay it.—That Chriſt deſcended into hell, is not a truth of yeſterday's growth, but almoſt all the fathers of the primitive church have acknowledged and received it as an article of their faith."—He then produces the teſtimony of twelve of them, paſſing by many others. Among whom St. Ignatius ſays expreſsly, "He (Chriſt) deſcended into hell alone, but aſcended with a multitude." And St. Jerome ſays, "Hell is a place of puniſhment and torments, where the rich man who uſed to be clothed in purple was ſeen; whither alſo the Lord deſcended, that he might looſe them from priſon who were bound there: *for none* is delivered from hell but only by the grace of Chriſt, and therefore *did Chriſt deſcend thither* after his death."

tivity captive, with twenty thouſand of the chariots of God, even thouſands of angels, in his train, to repoſſeſs his Father's throne, with ſuch abundant trophies from earth and hell! Pſal. lxviii. 17, 18. Let faith contemplate the god-like ſcene, and to its Author grateful wonder riſe.—If any of theſe thoughts are new to you, repute them not therefore falſe, but weigh them coolly. I think it muſt be owned that they do much more honour to God than the doctrine they are intended to combat, and of which many are ſo fond.

I now proceed to offer ſome thoughts on the future deſtination of fallen angels; but ſuch is the implacable hatred many bear to theſe once glorious, but now degraded ſpirits, who themſelves, perhaps, are content to be their tools and vaſſals, that this part of my taſk is like to be the leaſt acceptable. Some will retort with a ſneer, What! an advocate for, and a friend to devils! Yes, in the ſenſe our Lord was a friend to ſinners, which was his honour and our joy; tho' the proud ſelf-righteous zealots of his day meant it in reproach. What he ſaid to his diſciples on a certain occaſion, "Are ye not better than many ſparrows?" ſhews that fallen angels are better than fallen men, as being by creation, an higher order of beings than they.

I find the term rendered *firſt eſtate*, Jude 6, employed in ſcripture to denote Chriſt, as not only the efficient cauſe of all exiſtence, or their author and beginning, but alſo as their head and chief, to whom all things were at firſt united and ſubjected, as their life, preſerver, and ruler. The angels who kept not their *firſt eſtate*, who kept not *their own head*, who continued not in their allegiance to their rightful Lord, &c. Thus our Lord is called, Rev. iii. 14. *the beginning*, or *the head of the creation of God;* and in the ſame ſenſe the word occurs, Rev. i. 8. xxi. 6. xxii. 13. Thus fallen angels were connected to Chriſt as their head, in their creation ſtate, and he acknowledged by them as their Lord and Ruler. Now we find, that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, God means to *gather together in one all things* in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him, Eph. i. 10. The original literally ſignifies to *reduce*, *bring back*, or *reſtore* all things to Chriſt as their head; but there can be no re-heading where there was no former connection. Things in heaven muſt denote ſuch as were created in heaven, are of heavenly original, and are ſtill ſaid to have their principality in high places, or in the aerial region of our mundane ſyſtem. Neither holy angels, nor the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, need this recovery to Chriſt as their head, the former having never deſerted his ſtandard, and the latter being brought back to their allegiance; beſides they were not created in heaven, never had any ſtanding there, and therefore cannot be called things in heaven. We are obliged to apply this, therefore to the fallen angels; and here is a text of ſcripture that clearly proves their reſtoration to Chriſt, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, and voluntary ſubjection to him; for in every other ſenſe they are already ſubject to his controul. Tho' every text that relates to the recovery of men does not include that of fallen angels; yet this and ſome others plainly comprehend both.

In Col. i. 19, 20. we are told that it pleaſed God the Father to reconcile *all things to himſelf* by Jeſus Chriſt, whether they be things on earth, or things in

heaven. Does not this plainly include all lapſed intelligences? for theſe muſt be things on earth or things in heaven, in the ſenſe given above. The connection ſhews, that the reconciliation to be yet effected by Chriſt, in the above reſpect, will be as extenſive as the all things that are produced and preſerved in being, by his creating and preſerving power. Did not our Lord create the fallen angels, not indeed in their lapſed ſtate, but pure and holy?—Were they not alſo formed, and are they not ſtill preſerved, in common with his other works, for himſelf, or for his pleaſure and glory? Rev. iv. 11. Did he not love them when they were pure and holy, created after his own image, and made part of the morning ſtars that ſang together, and of all the ſons of God that ſhouted for joy, when this lower creation commenced? If God loved them then, which cannot be called in queſtion, muſt he not love them ſtill, unleſs it can be proved that he has changed ſince, and is not the ſame immutable God now that he was when the ſcriptures were penned, or the foundation of this world was laid?—That he cannot have pleaſure in them now is no objection to his loving them; for he cannot take pleaſure even in his own people, till formed by grace after his image; yet his love ſecures this in due time; and why ſhould it not be allowed to do ſo alſo, in the caſe of fallen angels? Jeſus is the center of union, and the medium of reconciliation to all, by whom lapſed intelligences ſhall be reconciled to God, to one another, and to thoſe pure ſpirits that ſtill keep their firſt eſtate, or adhere to Chriſt as their common head. And we find ſubjection to Chriſt extended not only to things in heaven and things on earth, but alſo to things under the earth, Phil. ii 10. What region can this be, which is diſtinguiſhed from heaven and earth, as the abode of intelligent beings? For my part, I know of none mentioned in ſcripture but hell; and if any know any other abode of rational creatures, let them point it out; for I acknowledge no purgatory, or middle ſtate, as diſtinct from hell.

In the remarkable ſong recorded, Rev. v. 13. every intelligent being in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, in the ſea, and all that are in theſe different regions, are expreſsly ſaid to join. Does this latitude of expreſſion leave room to exclude any of God's rational works? Do we envy our Lord ſo much honour, or his creatures ſo much happineſs, that we ſtrain every nerve to explain away the obvious meaning of ſuch plain portions of ſcripture? Men are tenacious enough of their own honour and property. We ſee, however, earth and under the earth, put for all the abodes of intelligent beings, Rev. v. 3.

That by our Lord's ſubduing all things to himſelf, and their bowing the knee to him, confeſſing him Lord, to the glory of God the Father, and ſwearing allegiance to him, it is evident, a very different thing is intended from that authority, reſtraint, and power, which he equally holds at all times over his enemies, and by the exerciſe of which, at the laſt day, the wicked ſhall all bow to him. The apoſtle admits this, when he ſays, "We ſee not all things yet put under him," which muſt mean voluntary ſubjection; for in every other ſenſe they were then put under him. If all this be true, ſay ſome with a ſneer, why not pray for the dead, and for devils? I refer to what an apoſtle ſays, 1 John v. 16, 17. as containing a ſufficient anſwer. If ſuch as committed the ſin unto

death were not to be prayed for, becauſe bound over to the age of judgment, to be puniſhed: for the ſame reaſon prayers ought not to be offered up for thoſe who are reſerved in hidden chains under darkneſs, to the judgment of the great day, whether wicked men or devils.

Some types and figures in ſcripture, which, read in its own light, have as expreſs and fixed a language and meaning as any part of it, lead us, in connection with the above plain texts and reaſons, to anticipate the recovery of fallen angels, as a glorious event to be yet accompliſhed under Meſſiah's adminiſtration, and neceſſary to the completion of his work.—Pharaoh was a type of the grand apoſtate, tho' that type carries us no farther than the deſtruction of the devil and his confederate ſpirits, in the lake of the ſecond death, of which the red ſea was an emblem. In alluſion to this, Pharaoh is called the *Dragon*, and *Leviathan*, whoſe head was broken in the great waters. As that obſtinate, proud prince, by being overwhelmed, with his forces in the red ſea, as the juſt puniſhment of both for reſiſting the will of God, and perſecuting and purſuing his people, loſt his dominion over theſe forces, and alſo over his other ſubjects; ſo Satan when ſhut up in Tophet, ſhall there, in proceſs of time, loſe his power and uſurped headſhip over his fellow-ſpirits, and wicked men. The king of Egypt's troops and cavalry, by whoſe aid he oppreſſed the ſeed of Abraham, and hoped to recover them to bondage, I view as the figure of Satan's confederate legions. If all this be not admitted, then this type, like moſt others upon the received ſyſtem, is mutilated. In Iſa. xxiv. 21, 22. the hoſt of the high ones, or the fallen angels, whom the Lord will puniſh, are repreſented as ſhut up in the priſon or dungeon along with the wicked kings of the earth, and as alſo *viſited*, or *found wanting*, as the original imports, after many days.

But in the haughty monarch of Babylon, we have a more full type of the wicked one, in his original glory, his crimes, debaſement, and recovery to his former ſplendour. In Iſa. xiv. 12. we find that prince deſignated *Lucifer*, a name alſo given to that fallen chief of the infernal hoſts; and in the 17th verſe, a ſtriking trait in that fallen ſpirit's character, is aſcribed to that proud tyrant, his *not opening the houſe of his priſoners*, or, as on margin, his *not letting his priſoners looſe homeward*. When ſeven times paſſed over that monarch in his debaſement, correſponding to the ſeven grand periods, or ages of Meſſiah's reign, during which Satan ſhall be puniſhed, his reaſon and ſtate returned to him, he glorified the God of heaven, and made a noble confeſſion of his faith before many witneſſes, in which you find this remarkable article,—*Thoſe that walk in pride he is able to abaſe*, Dan. iv. 37. The peruſal of Mr Winchester's valuable Lectures on Prophecy, firſt led my mind to the above view of this ſubject, where it is treated of at large.

In the viiith Pſalm, man's original dominion over the inferior creatures is deſcribed, as extending to all ſheep and oxen; the beaſts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fiſh of the ſea, and whatſoever paſſeth thro' the paths of the ſeas. This dominion Adam loſt; but in Chriſt it is reſtored, and thro' him to all the heirs of promiſe. As poſſeſſed and exerciſed by him, it muſt be understood to extend to all the works of creation, all which God is ſaid to have put

under his feet. The above ſpecific terms, underſtood in this latitude, muſt be taken in their metaphorical, as well as in their natural ſenſe; whence may be ſeen what the fowl of the air, and the fiſh of the ſea muſt ultimately intend, even all the fallen angels, and the wicked and unregenetate part of mankind. Without admitting theſe, we muſt exclude many of God's works from Meſſiah's dominions, and ſo contradict the ſacred text. The application of the paſſage in the pſalm, in Heb. xi. 8. plainly includes all theſe, and leads to expect their ſubjection to Chriſt, in a ſenſe in which they are not yet put under him, even by their own free and voluntary act. Thus we ſee to what extent, and for what purpoſe, God loved the world,—Chriſt is the propitiation for the ſins of the world, and taketh them away; and the Spirit is promiſed to convince the world of ſin, the great and common ſin of not believing God's record concerning his Son, alſo of righteouſneſs, and of a judgment to come, and which ſhall be continued till theſe purpoſes are anſwered, in all their intended extent.

In the parable of the ſower, Mat. xiii. 4,—19. our Lord teaches us to view the *fowls* of heaven, or the birds of the air, as the ſymbolic figure of the fallen angels, and hereby gives a key to the right underſtanding of ſeveral other paſſages of ſcripture. In the ſymbolic veſſel which Peter ſaw in viſion deſcending from the opened heaven, like a great ſheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, there were not only all manner of four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, or reptiles, all figurative of the idolatrous nations, and of all wicked men; but alſo *fowls of the air*, by which we are taught to underſtand the fallen angels, Acts x. 11, 12. Here we have a beautiful repreſentation, not only of that Providence, which extends to every creature, but chiefly of the mediation of Chriſt, which keeps the creation as in a large veſſel, and knits all to heaven, as their original and end. The veſſel was received up again into heaven, with all its contents, after the voice had thrice pronounced theſe clean, and forbidden the apoſtle to call them common or unclean, "What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common" Here the doctrine of univerſal reſtoration is plainly inculcated,—the denial of it prohibited; and that devils are included, I venture to affirm, our Lord being interpreter and judge. If God thrice called the contents of this myſtical veſſel clean, the fowls in it not excepted, and forbade Peter to call them common or unclean; we may ſee who they are that contradict their Maker, and preſume to call that common or uncleen, which his voice, in this inſtance, repeatedly pronounced *clean*, even thoſe who deny the reſtoration, or maintain that God will never cleanſe, fallen angels, and reprobate men. It was for the like of this conduct that our Saviour called Peter, Satan, and told him that he was an offence unto him, Mat. xvi. 23. and they would do well to conſider how far they merit the ſame character and rebuke who deny him the honour of any of his works, thro' their narrow, monopolizing views of his grace and kingdom.

In the account which we have of the material creation, we may ſee, as in a glaſs, a ſymbolical repreſentation of what ſhall take place hereafter in the reſtoration, or that ſpiritual creation, which ſhall make all things new. That the great abyſs of waters, before the undigeſted maſs of matter acquired its deſtined

form, was a type of the lake or abyſs of the ſecond death, there is good reaſon to believe. In that abyſs, the Holy Spirit, who moved on the face of the great deep, gave the fiſhy tribes their being, form and life. Our Lord teaches us to view them alſo as a figure of apoſtate men, Mat. xiii. 47, 48. and in Ezekiel xlvii. 9. we ſee how the fiſh that are caſt away dead at the cloſe of one diſpenſation, ſhall become alive under the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times. It was from the waters, or the great abyſs, that the Creator produced the fowl to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven—that he created *every winged fowl after his kind*, Gen. i. 20, 21. As the fowls or birds of various ſorts fly in the air, or open firmament of heaven, the preſent region of evil ſpirits; ſo when the ſame region ſhall be purified by the fire of the conflagration, and formed by the mighty power of God into new heavens, in which ſhall dwell righteouſneſs, or righteous beings, the figure ſhall be realized, theſe fallen ſpirits ſhall aſcend to their deſtined region, or habitation, having been created anew by the all-forming breath of the Almighty. In producing this wonderful change, the goſpel of the grace of God will have its own effect. When our Lord compares the goſpel, in its progreſs, to a tree ſprung from a grain of muſtard ſeed, he repreſents the birds of the air as coming and lodging in its branches, Mat. xiii. 31, 32. Paul puts this queſtion to the church at Corinth, "Do ye not know that the ſaints ſhall judge the world? Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels?" 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. The Pſalmiſt points out how they are to perform this judgment, Pſal. cxlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. The ſharp two-edged ſword of the Spirit, the word of truth, is to be the chief inſtrument in executing this judgment; and it muſt be after all the ſaints, or the church of the firſt-born is completed, that this judgment will take place; for *this honour have all his ſaints*. It appears to me that they will be employed, not only in the recovery of loſt men, denoted by the *world*, but alſo in judging, or reclaiming and reſtoring the fallen angels, as Paul intimates to have been a thing well known in his day. From the office of the judges in ancient Iſrael, we may learn what we are to underſtand by judging, as applied to Chriſt and his ſaints.

In Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream, he ſaw himſelf under the figure of a great tree, under which the beaſts of the field had ſhadow, and in the bows of which the fowls of heaven dwelt. This pourtrays to me the authority Satan has acquired over wicked men, denoted by *the beaſts of the field*, and fellow-apoſtate ſpirits, ſignified by *the fowls of the heaven*, Dan. iv. 12. By the command of an angel, or divine perſon, the tree is hewn down, and the beaſts are ordered, or permitted to get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches, ver. 14. This ſpeaks to me, in very plain language, the releaſe of wicked men, and fallen angels from the region of miſery, in which the ſentence of the Holy One ſhall be executed on the head of the infernal confederacy. Many, if not all his aſſociate ſpirits may be releaſed before himſelf, as among thoſe there are different degrees of guilt, as well as among men; for we read of one of them taking with him ſeven ſpirits more wicked than himſelf. The devil, the beaſt, and the falſe prophet, collectively, but, in an eſpecial manner, individually, "ſhall be tormented *day and night* for ever and ever, or nigh to the cloſe of the ages of ages,

which ſhall be finiſhed before eternity, with reſpect to creatures, ſhall commence, Rev. xx. 10. As his kingdom was made ſure to the Babyloniſh monarch after he was brought to know or acknowledge, in conſequence of his long and ſevere degradation and chaſtiſement, that the Moſt High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will; and as he was eſtabliſhed in his kingdom, and excellent majeſty was added unto him, even where he had formerly abuſed his extenſive power; ſo in all this we may read a prophetic deſcription of the reſtoration of Satan, of the glorious majeſty with which he ſhall be inveſted, as the head of all his fellow-apoſtate ſpirits, and that in the very region, now renewed and made fit for their bleſſed habitation, in which they formerly had the ſeat of their empire, or the new heavens which God ſhall create, and in which righteouſneſs ſhall dwell. Thus in our heavenly Father's houſe there ſhall be many manſions, all filled with their reſpective inhabitants; yet their ſeperate habitations ſhall not prevent or interrupt their friendly intercourſe.

In all this I have endeavoured to follow the word of God as my only guide, and tho' ſuch a view of the final iſſue of his adminiſtration be not commonly admitted; yet let us remember, that his thoughts are not as our thoughts, and that his ways are high as heaven above thoſe of the children of men. It eſcaped me in its proper place to obviate an objection, often urged, with apparent triumph, againſt the reſtoration of fallen angels. It is objected that our Lord took not on him the nature of angels, and therefore that the lapſed part of theſe intelligences cannot be benefited by his mediation. The text of ſcripture, on which this objection is founded, may as well be urged, as one juſtly obſerves, to prove that the benefits of his mediation ſhall be confined to the Jews, the natural ſeed of Abraham, to the entire excluſion of the Gentiles. But the ſacred text itſelf entirely removes the ground of this objection, which runs in the original, and reads on the margin, "For verily he taketh not hold of angels, but of the ſeed of Abraham he taketh hold," Heb. ii. 16. In the preſent diſpenſation of the goſpel, he does not lay hold of angels for their ſalvation, they being reſerved, by the determined purpoſe of God, for the judgment to be inflicted at the great day; but he lays hold on thoſe who approve themſelves the true ſeed of Abraham, by believing the promiſe of eternal life, inſured thro' faith in the Meſſiah, Gal. iii. 6, 7. and thus become the *firſt fruits* of God's creatures, Iſa. i. 18. Our Lord ſo far partook of the nature and office of angels, long before he appeared in the fleſh, as to juſtify his being called by their common name; which marks his relation to their order or claſs of beings.

Thus have I given you a few hints on this important branch of the reſtoration, the greater part of which has occurred in peruſing the ſcripture. I have followed no private interpretation in what I have adduced in proof from the word of truth, but have uſed that key of knowledge which that word itſelf affords, bringing the opinions of men to that teſt. May the Lord himſelf diſcover whether the view given of his adminiſtration in the received ſyſtem, or that which is attempted to be defended in theſe letters, is moſt honourable to the divine character, which is love itſelf, moſt harmonizing to the holy ſcriptures, brings moſt honour to the mediation of the Son of God, and is moſt friendly t

the honour and happineſs of his intelligent offspring!—Some of the profeſſed friends of truth may think theſe letters unworthy of an anſwer, or even a peruſal; and the writer regrets that they are not more worthy of the ſubject, and of the acceptance of the Public; yet truth is always worthy of defence, and will be thought ſo by all that love it, abſtracted from every ſuch conſideration. With all their imperfections, however, the author hopes, that among the friends of truth, ſome will be found who will deem them worthy of a peruſal; and ſo far as the cauſe of genuine Chriſtianity is pleaded in them, may they yield ſuch matter of rejoicing and praiſe. If any thing occur in them of a contrary tendency, the writer will be glad to ſee it corrected, having nothing more at heart than the triumph of truth.

Permit me to conclude this correſpondence, by a quotation from the excellent Preface of Mr Leiceſter to his two valuable ſermons on the Final Reſtoration.—"Thoſe who take paine to inform mankind, and to illuſtrate the difficulties and obſcurities of the ſacred volume, (in the meaning of which all are deeply intereſted, and in which nothing can be *uſeleſs*) deſerve at leaſt the thanks of the public. And if they ſhould fail of giving full ſatisfaction, yet we ought to eſteem them for their good intentions. In ſo intricate a path, where the moſt enlightened may err, no wonder if the dull and the ignorant loſe their way."—Praying the love of our heavenly Father,—the grace of our divine Redeemer,—and the fellowſhip of the Holy Spirit, may be with us, and with all men, I remain,

Dear Sir, in our common Lord and Saviour, &c.

P. S. The famous Milton puts a train of reaſoning in Adam's mouth, after his fall, reſpecting his threatened puniſhment, part of which applies, in my opinion, not unaptly to the ſubject of the reſtoration.

"For tho' the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath alſo? be it, man is not ſo.
——————How can he exerciſe
Wrath without end on man?
Can he make deathleſs death? that were to make
Strange contradiction, which to God himſelf
Impoſſible is held.
——————Will he draw out,
For anger's ſake, finite to infinite
In puniſh'd man, to ſatisfy his rigour
Satisfy'd never? that were to extend
His ſentence beyond duſt and nature's law.—Book x. l. 794.

Here the poet gives us his own ſentiments, and tho' he had intended to plead the cauſe of the reſtoration, he could hardly have done it in more appropriate terms. He elſewhere calls our Lord, *the deſtined reſtorer of mankind*; and he certainly well knew the ſenſe annexed to that term, as diſtinct from Saviour, which applies only to a part of mankind; for upon the common ſyſtem he cannot, with any propriety, be called either the Saviour or reſtorer of mankind, God *intending* that mankind ſhould neither be ſaved nor reſtored by him.—Tho' Dr

Young, in his poem on the Laſt Day, goes into the common opinion, reſpecting the eternity of future miſery, and admits ſome of the popular errors on that ſubject, yet he puts ſuch arguments and pleas in the mouth of a condemned ſinner, that you would think he meant to ſatirize the received doctrine, and argue againſt it. Of this complexion are the following lines.

" And ſhall my voice, ordain'd on hymns to dwell,
Corrupt to groans, and blow the fires of hell?
Oh! muſt I look with terror on my gain,
And with exiſtence only meaſure pain?
Ah! mercy! mercy! art thou dead above?
Is love extinguiſh'd in the ſource of love?
Juſt is my lot—But, Oh! muſt it tranſcend
The reach of time, deſpair a diſtant end?
With dreadful growth look forward and ariſe,
Where thought can't follow, and bold fancy dies.
My plunge but ſtill begun—And this for ſin.
Could I offend, if I had never been?
Father of mercies! why from ſilent earth
Didſt thou awake, and curſe me into birth?
Kuſh into being a reverſe of thee,
And animate a clod with miſery?
And can'ſt thou then look down from perfect bliſs,
And ſee me plunging in the dark abyſs,
Calling thee Father in a ſea of fire,
Or pouring blaſphemies at thy deſire?
With mortals anguiſh wilt thou raiſe thy name,
And by my pangs Omnipotence proclaim?
Thou art all love, all mercy, all divine,
And ſhall I make thoſe glories ceaſe to ſhine?
Shall ſinful man grow great by his offence,
And from its courſe turn back omnipotence?
Forbid it! and Oh! grant, great God at leaſt
This one, this ſlender, almoſt no requeſt;
When I have wept a thouſand lives away,
When torment is grown weary of its prey,
When I have rav'd ten thouſand years in fire,
Ten thouſand thouſands, let me then expire."

If the Doctor firmly believed the eternity of future torment, why would he thus furniſh weapons to the opponents of that doctrine? While we allow God's threatenings their own place and weight, let us not ſo expound and extend them, as to give no room to his promiſes, and to the exerciſe of that mercy which is over all his works, and will rejoice over and beyond the reign of judgment.—The ſcriptures repreſent that miſery, whether here or hereafter, that is the wages or fruit of ſin, by the term death. Why ſhould we make the reign of death endleſs, ſeeing the word of truth aſſures us that death ſhall be deſtroyed, as the laſt enemy in exiſtence—that death ſhall be no more, nor ſorrow, nor crying, nor pain; becauſe the former things are paſſed away, even ſin, and all its bitter fruits; 1 Cor. xv. 26. Rev. xxi. 4.

Dr Young, in another part of his poem, makes hope to bloſſom almoſt in the

ſhades of hell, in the caſe of Judas himſelf, and gives us an amiable picture of mercy. I'll conclude this poſtſcript with the paragraph a little varied, and the addition of four lines.

But Oh! ye ſons of men, exalt your voice,
And bid the ſoul thro' all her powers rejoice;
Mercy, his darling, in his boſom found,
Scatters ambroſial odours all around;
Unbends his brow, and mitigates his frown,
And ſooths his wrath, and melts his thunder down,
The ſcene is chang'd; now man exalt thine eye,
In thy dread Judge thy dear Redeemer ſpy;
Let balmy hope your tortur'd boſoms ſwell,
For hope ſhall bloſſom in the ſhades of hell.
A being form'd his Maker to adore,
Will not be left unceaſing to deplore;
Is deathleſs death, and pangs of dread deſpair,
His fate who was eternal life to ſhare?

APPENDIX.

Good Lord be near to patronize
The truth that hell would criticiſe,—
That own thy great name to be Love,
In whom paternal bowels move;
Who ſeeks the happineſs of all,
To whom each ſinner yet ſhall fall—
Whoſe goodneſs evil ſhall o'ercome,
And light bring from the darkeſt gloom.

A SERMON of Jonathan Edwards, on the Eternity of Hell Torments, from Mat. xxv. 46. falling lately into my hands, I weighed his arguments with ſome attention, and deſire to be ſet right if I had miſrepreſented the ſubject. I however found nothing in it to ſhake my belief of the doctrine which I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh upon the ſacred oracles. With all due deference to the Preſident's memory, as a man of learning, piety, and great ability, and alſo of great acuteneſs as a polemic writer; reſpect to a higher authority obliges me to diſſent from what, with my preſent views, I muſt account his miſtakes.

In the diſcourſe he diſcuſſes the four following things: 1. That it is not contrary to the divine perfections, to inflict on wicked men, a puniſhment that is abſolutely eternal.—2. That the eternal death which God threatens, is not annihilation, but an abiding ſenſible puniſhment, or miſery.—3. That this miſery will not only continue for a long time, but will be abſolutely without end.—And 4. That various good ends will be obtained by the eternal puniſhment of the wicked."—The ſecond of theſe points he clearly proves, by ſhewing that the puniſhment threatenened cannot be annihilation, but really conſiſts in an abiding, ſenſible miſery. But he is far from ſucceding ſo well, in my opinion, in proving the other points propoſed. I at the ſame time grant, that a number of his arguments will appear concluſive to thoſe who have not coolly examined the arguments on both ſides, and carefully attended to the ſcripture phraſeology. The only argument he uſes to prove that it is agreeable to the juſtice of God to inflict an eternal puniſhment on the wicked, is, that *ſin is an infinite evil*, and therefore deſerves ſuch a puniſhment. This he attempts to prove by this conſideration, that the obligation to love and obey God is infinite, and therefore the violation of it is an infinite evil. I have, in a preceding part of theſe letters, ſhewed the fallacy of this mode of reaſoning, which equally concludes againſt the forgiveneſs of ſin in every caſe. The obligation to love and obey God ariſes from his own perfections, which are infinite; but the act of the creature in violating this obligation muſt be finite, like himſelf; elſe every degree of aggravation in ſin is at once deſtroyed, contrary to ſcripture and common ſenſe; for in

infinity there cannot be greater and leſs. What God daily does in pardoning ſin, is a proof of what he may do at pleaſure, be the evil of it ever ſo great. And were the evil of every ſin infinite, the atonement of Chriſt, which could not be more than infinite in its value, could procure but the pardon of one ſin.—This paragraph the Preſident concludes, by obſerving, "That there is no evading this reaſoning, but by denying that God is infinitely glorious;" but this train of reaſoning is eaſily overturned, and yet God maintained to be infinitely glorious. Does what he has already done in forgiving ſin diminiſh his glory? or can he ſuffer in his glory by the exerciſe of his mercy in future? In the account he gave of himſelf to Moſes, he ſhewed that the exerciſe of his mercy is his greateſt glory, and will perpetuate his name and memorial to all generations.

He farther argues the eternity of hell torments, from God's infinite hatred of ſin, and enmity to it, as if this could not be manifeſted, without permitting its eternal exiſtence, and proſecuting it with relentleſs wrath. Whether of the two diſcovers the greateſt hatred of a ſerpent, he that kills it outright, or he that permits it to live, and contents himſelf with tormenting it? Let common ſenſe ſay, if God does not much more effectually diſcover his abhorrence of ſin, by deviſing a plan that will effect its total and final deſtruction, and deliver his wretched creatures from its dominion; than by keeping it and them eternally before his eyes, tho' puniſhed with ever ſo extreme miſery.—By ſuch a train of reaſoning, he comes to the concluſion, "That if it be ſuitable there ſhould be *infinite hatred of ſin* in God, it muſt be ſuitable that he ſhould execute an infinite puniſhment on it; and ſo the perfections of God require, that he ſhould puniſh ſin with an infinite, or, which is the ſame thing, with an *eternal* puniſhment."—But to ſhew that God is at perfect liberty to forgive ſin, when he pleaſes, thro' the mediation of his Son, and that no perfection of his nature requires it ſhould be puniſhed in any caſe, without end, we need only refer, as I have already obſerved, to what he has already done in forgiving it, and ſtands engaged by promiſe to do hereafter; ſo that ſuch reaſonings go to limit the Holy One of Iſrael, as if he could not do with his own creatures, and his own grace, whatever ſeemeth him good.

I enter not upon his reaſoning from the ſcripture phraſes, *everlaſting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, and the like, having, in the courſe of theſe letters, ſhewn how inconcluſive it is in this argument; for they cannot but grant the advocates of the reſtoration, that theſe terms are applied to things of limited duration, times almoſt paſt number in ſcripture. Could they ſhew that there is ſomething in the very nature of future puniſhment that muſt render it eternal, and oblige to take ſuch terms, when applied to it, always in that unlimited ſenſe, the point in diſpute would be decided; but to ſhew this is impoſſible.

Mr Edwards thinks the puniſhment of the wicked muſt be eternal, becauſe, according to him, when they ſhall be adjudged to it, time itſelf, and all its ages and diſpenſations, ſhall come to an end. I have already ſhewed that time, ſo far from terminating before the final ſentence of the wicked ſhall be executed, ſhall endure till the period of puniſhment ſhall come to a cloſe, and the reſtitution of *all things be effected*. I might obſerve above, that tho' the words *everlaſting*,

eternal, &c. when applied to future miſery ſhould import never-ending duration, even this would not prove that miſery to be ſtrictly eternal. The Preſident labours to prove that the divine veracity requires it ſhould; but I humbly think he fails in proof. What Biſhop Tillotſon admits in one of his ſermons, which I had in my eye to extract, is certainly, in my opinion, much more to the purpoſe, as agreeing with what we have recorded of the divine procedure. Should the Lord remit the threatened, or terminate the inflicted puniſhment, who has a right to complain? Thoſe who are thereby relieved are out of the queſtion. Chriſtians, however much inclined to complain, have as little right to do it, as Jonah at the mercy extended to the inhabitants of Nineveh, and the elder brother in the parable at the reſtoration of his young brother. In the caſe of Nineveh the threatening was expreſs, yet the event ſhewed that God ſuſpended the execution of it upon a condition unforeſeen by man. Hezekiah was told to ſet his houſe in order, for that he muſt die and not live; and he underſtood it to mean immediate death, yet fifteen years were added to his life. Now if the Lord ſuſpends the execution of a threatening upon a condition foreſeen only by himſelf, and yet not infringe upon his veracity; may he not remove future puniſhment, when his own grace ſhall produce repentance, tho' foreſeeing this, the threatening ſhould be expreſſed in ever ſuch unlimited terms? It is deemed one of the prerogatives of earthly kings, to remit or mitigate puniſhment, tho' the ſentence of the law be expreſs and paſſed; and ſhall we limit our Maker more than theſe his ſubjects?

The good and important ends which will be obtained, according to this venerable author, *by the eternal puniſhment of the wicked*, are four:—

Firſt, that "hereby God vindicates his injured Majeſty,"-which vindication certainly requires no ſuch ſacrifice. To repreſent God as injured or benefited by the conduct of his creatures, is, in my opinion, repugnant to reaſon and ſcripture, Job xxxv. 7. xxii. 3. His glorious Majeſty cannot be injured, whence the puniſhment of ſin muſt be aſcribed to ſome other cauſe; and even admitting it could, does the vindication of it require the infliction of torments on the work of his hands, extreme in degree, and endleſs in duration? Why are we ſo often told in ſcripture that God is ſlow to anger, of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil—that he will not contend for ever, nor be always wroth—that he retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy; if there be any truth in ſuch a view of his adminiſtration, as makes the execution of eternal vengeance on the far greater part of his intelligent offſpring abſolutely neceſſary to the vindication of his injured majeſty, and yet what will never appeaſe his wrath? I can ſcarce conceive any thing that injures God's majeſty more in the eye of reaſon and truth, than ſuch a view of his paternal and mediatorial government; for with regard to him, the groundleſs dreams, and antichriſtian ſlanders of men, cannot affect him.

A ſecond good and important end, to be attained by the eternal puniſhment of the wicked, is, That "God thereby glorifies his juſtice." This I muſt deny; for could they once glorify juſtice by their ſufferings, they could, upon the footing of *juſtice itſelf*, demand their releaſe, as a debtor can when the debt

which he is incarcerated is fully paid. Alſo what glorifies juſtice muſt glorify God himſelf, and whatever glorifies him muſt be pleaſing to him; but he declares with an oath, that he has no pleaſure in the death or miſery of the wicked, which ſhews plainly that this does not glorify his juſtice. But future puniſhment, viewed as corrective, brings glory to all the perfections of Deity. This particular is thus concluded; "The *vindictive* juſtice of God will appear ſtrict, exact, awful, terrible, and therefore glorious." To call Divine juſtice vindictive, is little, if at all ſhort of blaſphemy. According to a ſtandard dictionary of the Engliſh language, the term denotes revengeful, malicious, given to revenge. Is this a juſt view of Divine juſtice? To pronounce the deciſions of a common court of juſtice, and their execution, *vindictive*, would be to libel the court as actuated by the baſeſt paſſions that can infect the human heart. The moment the exerciſe of juſtice becomes vindictive, that moment it ceaſes to be juſt, inſtead of being glorious. But what I have already ſaid of the nature and province of Divine juſtice, when anſwering ſome objections, may ſuffice to ſhew that the epithet vindictive can by no means apply to it; for juſtice in God aids the deſigns of mercy, and its exerciſe is neceſſary to their accompliſhment.

A third important end, ſerved by the eternal puniſhment of the wicked, according to Mr Edwards, is, that "God hereby indirectly glorifies his grace on the veſſels of mercy. The ſaints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned—they will be tormented in the preſence of the glorified ſaints.—A view of the miſery of the damned will double the ardor of the love and gratitude of the ſaints in heaven." Strange as this may ſeem to an unprejudiced mind, Mr Edwards is not ſingular in this notion; for many that believe the doctrine of endleſs damnation ſay, and ſometimes from the pulpit and the preſs, that "the ſight of hell torments will exalt the happineſs of the ſaints to all eternity;" and ſome go farther. A Mr Hopkins in New England, one of Mr Edwards's diſciples, goes the length to ſay, in a work he has publiſhed on this ſubject, that *if the fire of hell ſhould go out, the light of heaven would no longer ſhine;* and adds, that *for every degree of miſery which the damned in hell ſhall feel, the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven ſhall be increaſed millions of millions of degrees.* This quotation I extract from Mr Winchelſea's Letter to C. E. De Coetlogon, London, upon this ſermon, not having that part of Hopkin's works in my poſſeſſion. The above ſtrictures were written before I had the pleaſure of ſeeing that letter.

The above ſtrange aſſertion reminds me of a ſentiment produced from a writer of this caſt, in Biſhop Burnet's treatiſe on the ſtate of the dead. The ſentiment, ſo far as I can recollect, is to this purpoſe, That tho' all the tortures that have ever been inflicted by human beings were to meet on one man, yet this would fall ſhort of the miſery that one ſingle ſin deſerves, or rather, of what every individual would have to bear, tho' this miſery were divided among all the human beings that have been, are, or ſhall be on the earth. If ſuch be the miſery due for one ſin, what miſery muſt be inflicted for all the ſins of a man's *life!* But where will they get a finite being to bear all this, and to bear up under it to all eternity? To make all this neceſſary to the happineſs of the ſaints,

and the means of increaſing that happineſs *millions of millions of degrees*, is a ſtrange doctrine to come from a human being, favoured with the light of divine revelation. God forbid I ſhould covet happineſs at ſo dear a rate to any of my fellow creatures! and bleſſed be his name that I have not ſo learned Chriſt.

The laſt important end aſſigned to eternal puniſhment, in the ſermon under review, is, That "the ſight of hell torment will exalt the happineſs of the ſaints for ever; for this will make them prize God's favour and love vaſtly the more, and they will be ſo much the more happy in the enjoyment of it." A ſtrange view of the divine adminiſtration, that makes the eternal and extreme miſery and torment of the far greater part of the intelligent creation, an eſſential acceſſion to the eternal happineſs of the other! What a horrid reflection on God's paternal character, and on the plan he has adopted in governing his intelligent offspring! The carnal views of the torments of hell, given in ſome of our popular authors, are enough to ſtumble the faith of people in the truth of ſcripture; but they are the vain dreams of men, not the ſober dictates of eternal wiſdom. By ſuch diſtorted views of the divine character and adminiſtration, the cauſe of infidelity has gained much ground; and yet the bulk of Chriſtians think they are doing God an eſſential ſervice, by giving ſuch a view of him as they would not bear to be given of themſelves. But few feel the ſame zeal for the honour of the Divine character, that they are ready to expreſs for the honour of their own. It is eaſy to conceive how holy and happy beings can rejoice while they behold a puniſhment inflicted, that is corrective and not vindictive, that will be over-ruled for the recovery of their brethren to holineſs and happineſs, and not employed to their endleſs torment. But to behold their miſery on the common ſyſtem, with ſelf-complacency and joy, would only argue the want of conformity to God and the Saviour in holy diſpoſitions, yea, the want of common humanity, which no degree of glory is intended to abſorb.

Some paſſages of the ſermon which are brought to prove the never-ceaſing duration of future miſery, in my opinion, rather hold forth the reverſe. Of this nature is that text, Ezek. xxii. 21, 22, alſo Deut. vii. 10. and Job xxi. 19, 20, which you can conſult at your leiſure. The Author thinks the expreſſion, ſo often annexed to the threatenings of God's wrath againſt wicked men, "And ye ſhall *know* that I am Jehovah," is quite inconſiſtent with any future exerciſe of mercy towards them; whereas it appears to me to point out the benign end of all divine chaſtiſements, the recovery of obſtinate offenders to ſuch a knowledge of the God that made and upholds them, as will lead to put their truſt in him. The Lord's blowing upon ſinners in the furnace of his wrath, as the prophet expreſſes it, whence they ſhall be melted in the midſt thereof, as ſilver is melted in the furnace, appears to me expreſſive of his care over them, alſo of his merciful purpoſe towards them, and of the grand deſign of all the ſufferings to which they ſhall be ſubjected. Has the refiner no end in melting his ſilver in the furnace? Does he mean to leave it always there, and never bring it thence to be converted to ſome valuable purpoſe? So we are taught to believe by the received doctrine; but ſuch plain figures convey the quite oppoſite ſentiment, and juſtify us in *ſaying*, that God is not the only refiner in the univerſe that will

leave his precious metal always to burn in his preſence, and never uſe the leaſt portion of it to any valuable purpoſe. Such a conduct be far from him, and from us to tax him with it. The promiſe points out the great end God has in view in puniſhing his guilty creatures, not their final deſtruction, but that he may purely purge away their droſs, and take away all their tin, Iſa. i. 21. None have a right to reſtrict this and ſimilar promiſes to the elect.

While we exalt the character and work of the ever bleſſed Jeſus, which are indeed above all bleſſing and praiſe, let us beware that we do it not at the expence of the Father, as if his love and mercy, with all their precious fruits, of which Chriſt is chief, were extorted from him; whereas they are eſſential to his nature, and the very ſource whence our ſalvation from firſt to laſt flows. We ſhould love God from an aſſurance that he firſt loved us, and gave his Son to the death for us.

Mr Edwards, with many others, concludes future miſery to be endleſs, becauſe our Lord ſays to the perſon who declines agreeing with his adverſary while he is in the way with him, "Verily I ſay unto thee, thou ſhalt not depart thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing, or the very laſt mite," Mat. v. 23—26. The adverſary intends one who is ſo in a forenſic ſenſe, or has it in his power to ſue us at law to our prejudice. The difficulty of gaining ſuch an one we ſee, Prov. xviii. 19. and our Lord points out the importance of as ſpeedy an accommodation as poſſible, and the rigorous exaction of the whole debt, with coſts, if the matter is permitted to go to the extreme. This paſſage makes neither for nor againſt the reſtoration.

Mr Edwards forgets himſelf when he aſſerts, That "ſuch expreſſions are uſed to ſet forth the puniſhment of the wicked, as are never uſed in the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament to ſignify any thing but a proper eternity." In proof of this he adduces the phraſe *for ever and ever*, or *to the ages of ages*, which is applied to future miſery in the following paſſages, Rev. xiv. 11. xix. 3. xx. 10. But our Lord uſes the original term in the ſingular to denote a limited period, Mat. xiii. 39. the harveſt is the *end of the world*, or the *cloſe of the age* or *diſpenſation*, or, if they will, of eternity. If the term in the ſingular denote a period of limited duration, as our Lord teaches us to underſtand it, then the plural cannot denote unlimited duration; for no definite number of ages can amount to a proper eternity. What Mr Edwards, and the advocates of the common doctrine would make ſuch, we ſee bounded by the ſucceſſion of day and night, in two of the above paſſages which are referred to as a proof of their importing proper eternity. But we are taught to believe that when proper eternity ſhall commence, day and night ſhall forego their alternate ſway, Job xxvi. 10. It is ſurpriſing that a perſon of ſuch learning and knowledge of ſcripture, ſhould ſay, That the New Teſtament "is ignorant of any higher expreſſion than this;" and that "if this does not ſignify a proper eternity, there is none that does." The word *eternity* occurs only once in our Engliſh Bible, Iſa. lvii. 15. and it is the ſame that is rendered, Jonah ii. 6. *for ever*.

The words and phraſes employed to denote the duration of future felicity, *and of its Author*, even in our Engliſh verſion, are much ſtronger than thoſe

which are applied to future miſery, and with this advantage, that there can be no diſpute about their meaning. We read of "the power of an *endleſs life*;" Heb. vii. 16.—"an inheritance *incorruptible*, and that *fadeth not away*," 1 Pet. i. 4.—"The King *immortal*, &c. who only hath *immortality*," &c. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 16.—"a treaſure in the heavens that *faileth not*," Luke xii. 33.—a crown of *life*; a crown of glory that *fadeth not away*," Rev. ii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 4.—"*Neither can they die any more*, Luke xx. 36. Weigh theſe phraſes, and ſay if the terms and phraſes that denote the duration of future miſery are as ſtrong and unequivocal as thoſe which are employed to expreſs the duration of the happineſs of the righteous, and the immortal exiſtence of God himſelf. As Mr Edwards, with others, lays much ſtreſs on the phraſe, *the fire ſhall not be quenched*, in addition to the texts adduced in obviating this objection, you may conſult Jer. vii. 20. Amos v. 6. 2 Kings xxii. 17. Ezek. xx. 47, 48. to which others might be added.

The arguments often urged to ſupport the doctrine of endleſs miſery, the force of the words *eternal*, *everlaſting*, *for ever*, &c. will, with equal propriety, anſwer the purpoſe of a Jew againſt Chriſtianity itſelf; for he can urge that theſe very terms and phraſes are applied to the Moſaic ritual, and therefore that it ought to endure for ever, and can never be aboliſhed, or ſucceeded by another diſpenſation. The reader may ſee how theſe terms are uſed to expreſs this preſent ſtate in the following texts: Mat. xii. 32. xiii. 22, 39, 40, 49. xxiv. 3. xxviii. 20. Mark iv. 19. Luke i. 70. xvi. 8. xx. 34. John ix. 32. Acts iii. 21. xv. 18. Rom. xii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 20. ii. 6, 7. iii. 18. viii. 13. x. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Gal. i. 4. Eph. i. 21. vi. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 2 Tim. i. 9. iv. 10. Tit. i. 2. ii. 12. An eminent Calviniſtic divine, and Calvin's colleague, Beza, in his literal Latin verſion of the Greek Teſtament, renders αιων in all the above texts but one, 1 Cor. viii. 13. by *ævum*, or *ſeculum*, *age*.—That the correſpondent words and phraſes in Hebrew denote ſomething very different from a proper eternity, appears from the following texts, out of many that might be adduced, Iſa. xxx. 8. xxxiv. 10, 17. Jer. vii. 7. xxv. 5. Gen. xiii. 15. Exod. xii. 14, 24. xxi. 6. Lev. xxv. 23, 30, 46. Gen. xvii. 8. xlix. 26. It is admitted in all the Hebrew and Greek lexicons I have had acceſs to conſult, that the terms and phraſes which are uſed in ſcripture to ſet forth the duration of future miſery, are much oftener to be taken in a definite than in an indefinite ſenſe; and why ſhould we admit that they muſt be taken in an indefinite ſenſe when they refer to that ſubject, if no ſtronger reaſons can be aſſigned than theſe which have been examined? Conſidering the character Mr Edwards has deſervedly held in the religious world, and the circulation and applauſe his ſermon on the Eternity of future Torment has acquired, I thought proper to pay it ſome attention, with the reſult of which the reader is here preſented. Thoſe who would wiſh for farther ſatisfaction, may conſult the letter referred to above.

It was once intended to favour the public in this Tract with Mr Vidler's two firſt excellent letters to Mr Fuller, in vol. 1ſt of the Univerſaliſt's Miſcellany

and alſo a few extracts from Mr Wright's examination of Dr Ryland's Sermon, entitled, The Firſt Lie Refuted, in which Mr W. has evidently the ſuperiority and places a number of things in a clear, ſatisfactory light; but theſe, and ſome other things, are laid aſide for want of room, not chuſing to increaſe the price of the work. Thoſe who chuſe can have recourſe to theſe productions.

The following article, on the Right of Individual Judgment in Religion, an extract from a late ſermon, is thought worthy of a place: "The right of individual judgment in religion is derived to you from God; it is his gift; coeval with your rational natures; and confirmed anew to you, in the miſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, being the eſſence of that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free. In the exerciſe of this privilege is included all that is honeſt in a Chriſtian; all the ſincerity of their devotion to God, and to his truth. I ſummon you to inquire into his will, in whatever way this will may be conveyed to you; without ſuffering one prejudice to intercept, one paſſion to corrupt, one intereſt to divert, or one fear to intimidate you in the virtuous purſuit. And whatever conviction, whatever faith, this active, intellectual, and honeſt inquiry ſhall conduct you to, that is your religion, your Chriſtianity; which, with an ingenious and decent firmneſs, you are to profeſs to the world; it is that confeſſion of your Maſter which you are to make before men, if you expect that he will confeſs you before men and angels in the laſt diſcriminating day."—Preached at the Annual Provincial Meeting of the Miniſters of the Preſbyterian Perſuaſion, Lancaſhire, 25th of June, 1800, by Geo, Walker, F. R. S. &c.

I had extracted from Parkhurſt's Hebrew Lexicon what he has on the word *gnolam*, in its different forms, to ſhew that it is uſed for *times* and *ſeaſons*, or *periods hidden or concealed from man*, without importing in itſelf unlimited duration; but cannot give it place here. From this word he thinks the Engliſh words *helmet*, what covers—*whelm*, *overwhelm*, or to bury or conceal, and the old word *whilom*, formerly; as alſo the Latin word *olim*, which latter refers to time as well future as paſt, are derived.

Becauſe lexicographers derive the word *aion*, age or diſpenſation, from αει, always, and ων, being, I have heard it argued that it muſt denote eternity, as that duration which always exiſts, and I recollect that I once thought this a very good proof. But when we find our Lord and his apoſtles often uſing that term to denote periods of limited duration, ſome of which have already come to an end, no derivation or compoſition of the word can be oppoſed to ſuch authority, no not the authority of all the dictionary makers in the world. In a late lexicon on the Greek Teſtament, I find αιο defined, *duration*, or *continuance of time*, but with great variety; *eternity*, whether paſt or to come; *the duration of this world; the time of this preſent life; this world; an age, or diſpenſation of providence*; in the plural, *the ages of the world*. Tho' all this agrees with the ſenſe commonly *given of the term*, yet to ſome of the above ſenſes an objection might be made.

Admitting that the plural denotes *the ages of the world*, which it in fact does, or the ages of Meſſiah's reign, which is bounded by time, this cuts off the common meaning given to *for ever and ever*, it being in the Greek the plural of αιων repeated. There is a material difference between the continuance of time, from one point of it to another, which is imported in the compoſition of the word, and endleſs duration.—In the ſame lexicon, the adjective form of the word is rendered *eternal*, but χρονοι αιονιοι, the example given, inſtead of being tranſlated *the ages of the world*, ſhould be rendered the *eternal time*, or *ages*, which ſhews that the adjective αιονιας cannot bear often to be tranſlated eternal. And indeed how can the ſtream exceed its fountain, or a being confeſſedly finite, be the parent of an infinite being? That the ſame thing ſhould denote two things ſo very different or oppoſite, as the limited period of a man's life, a nundred years, a diſpenſation of providence and the like, and proper eternity, which have nothing in common but the general idea of duration, appears to me as ſtrange, as to ſuppoſe that one and the ſame being can be finite and infinite.

Ariſtotle, in his treatiſe De Mundo, as quoted by Parkhurſt on the Greek word κοσμος, world, defines it. *A ſyſtem compoſed of the heaven and the earth, and of the beings contained in them; otherwiſe the order and beautiful arrangement of the univerſe is called koſmos.* What the Greeks called κοσμος, world, by a name denoting *ornament*, the Latins denominate *mundus*, from its perfect and complete elegance.—Seeing our Lord came to ſave or reſtore the world, and is ſaid to be the propitiation for the whole world, why ſhould not his mediation be allowed to have in view the recovery of the univerſal ſyſtem, or the univerſe, to that perfection and complete order and elegance, which the term world in both theſe languages denotes? Thus he is the Author and finiſher, the Creator and reſtorer of all his Father's works.

A PRAYER.

GREAT Source of all that's either good or great,
Who haſt in light thy bright imperial ſeat,
Whoſe are perfections glorious and divine,
In all of which thy boundleſs glories ſhine.
Father of all, to be by all ador'd,
Bleſt Spring of Life, thou univerſal Lord,
Accept the homage we thy greatneſs owe,
Before whoſe throne ſhall every knee yet bow.
Thy greatneſs far tranſcends angelic praiſe,
To thee alone are known thy wond'rous ways.
In his dear name, in whom thy glories join,
Regard thy ſervant, on his labours ſhine,
Command thy bleſſing from thy throne on high,
And view thy off-ſpring with propitious eye.
Purge off the film that makes us worſe than blind,
And ſhed thy light to cheer the human mind.
Send forth thy Spirit, whoſe all quick'ning breath,
Renews the face of the decayed earth,
To ſhew religion in her own attire.
And with her charms ſet all our ſouls on fire.
Thy long hid word to common uſe reſtore,
Set free from chains of falſe perverted lore;
The ſchoolmens arts, who teach that word to ſay
Whate'er may ſerve their wiſdom to diſplay;
That in this glaſs thy glory may be ſeen,
Nor man have pow'r to draw a vail between;
That love and mercy, ſeen in thine own light,
May ſoon diſpel the brooding ſhades of night.
Father of lights, diffuſe thy beams divine,
And on thy truth with bright effulgence ſhine,
That fraught with love thy works may all appear,
Whence thy kind hand ſhall wipe off every tear.
In giving life, to render bleſt thy aim,
Jehovah merciful is ſtill thy name;
Thy dear memorial while ages laſt,
As it has been thro' all the ages paſt.
O give to ſhew thou art the Love Supreme,
Who from all ill thy creatures ſhalt redeem,
That thy whole word and works thee clearly prove,
A God moſt juſt, withal the God of love.
Since thy bleſt word predicts that grace ſhall reign,
And mercy triumph over every pain,
Let not frail man preſume thy hand to bind,
And ſhut the gates of mercy on mankind.
How vaſt thy love, even ſeraphs cannot tell,
Thy love can reach the loweſt depths of hell.
Thy thoughts are high, to theſe we cannot ſoar,
'Tis ours to learn, and humbly to adore.
Thy thoughts are deep—oft hid from human eyes,
And wa, s in ſeas, or clouds that ſkim the ſkies;
For who is fit thy thoughts and ways to ſcan?
Lord teach to juſtify theſe ways to man;
To ſpeak thy truth in each eſſay'd defence
Of thy all-wiſe paternal providence;
That thence Meſſiah glory may derive,
By whom alone the loſt and dead ſhall live!
Haſt thou decreed thy love ſhould comprehend
Thy works each one, theſe in perfection end;
That ſin and woe ſhall yield their baneful ſway,
And grace at length diffuſe eternal day?
Repel each ſlander that belies thy fame,
And vindicate the honour of thy name,
That ill with good may ſtill be overcome,
And ſinners won to ſeek their Father's home;
That love ſupreme, which glorious views affords,
May draw to duty with parental cords!
O let thy love, clad in mild beams, appear,
To glad the heart, and wipe off ev'ry tear;
Conſume our droſs with its refining flame,
And more endear our God and Saviour's name!
Since love to men demands the ſecond place,
Shed thine own love—the parent of that grace.
Lord, if my views accord not with thy word,
To ſee the error ſoon thy light afford,
That chaff and ſtubble at thy breath may fly,
Before thy fan ſuch rubbiſh cannot lie.
If in the right, O teach me to contend
For what in bliſs and praiſe complete ſhall end,
That ſo thy word may thee to all approve
The God of truth, and yet the God of love.
In thine own beams, O give to ſee the light,
By theſe diſpel the clouds of mental night,
That light, reflected on thy ways, may ſhine,
And ſhew their Author potent and benign.
Each plant root up not planted by thy hand,
And Satan's works deſtroy in every land,
That the great end of Jeſus' life and death
May be effected upon all that breathe.
Thou know'ſt, (for nothing from thee lies conceal'd),
I truth deſire—the truth by thee reveal'd;—
Truth—truth alone my chief regard ſhall claim,
I aſk not wealth, nor court the voice of fame.
Lord, grant I may this ſacred treaſure find,
T' enrich and bleſs whole myriads of mankind!
My thoughts inſpire, illume the theme divine,
Which needs no verſe—no numbers dreſt in rhyme.
If 'tis thy will that all ſhould ſhare thy love,
And mercy ſmile on wretches from above,
That jub'lee's clarion ſhall one day proclaim,
O'er all, the honour of thy ſaving name,
Releaſe to captives, Paradiſe reſtor'd,
An univerſe renewed by the Lord;

Let none that fear thee at the grace repine,
Mercy to grant, the right is ſolely thine;
And who may ſay, Great Lord, why doſt thou ſo?
For in thy breaſt divine compaſſions flow.
A ſpring ſo pure, ſo fraught with pureſt love,
Muſt yet relieve the wretched from above;
For love paternal and vindictive wrath
Cannot proceed from thy all-quickening breath;
A love to bleſs the few with endleſs joy,
As endleſs wrath all others to deſtroy!
If thou be love, and with compaſſion fraught,
Where is vindictive vengeance to be ſought?
Sure thou are not the only Sire, to deal
Stripes to thy offspring that preclude their weal!
Paternal ſtripes muſt ſtill have good in ſight,
The rebel to reclaim from wrong to right.
Forgive, O Lord, that we a Father's name
Did by our perverſe tenets long blaſpheme,
Aſcribe to thee what men in men abhor,
A father's wrath that yields to peace no more,
Relentleſs torture all devoid of love.
While in thy breaſt ſhall no ſoft paſſion move.
If to ſuch endleſs vengeance doom'd to fall,
Wouldſt thou not bluſh thy offspring them to call?
If 'tis thy will chief prodigals to ſpare,
At length reſtore inferior bliſs to ſhare,
Thy will be done—my ſoul, do not repine,
In ſuch a work ſhall truth and mercy ſhine.

This humble Eſſay deign, O Lord, to ſpeed,
So far as it the cauſe of truth may plead.
May ſacred truth, and that alone, preſide,
Tho' ſome ſhould cavil, and ſtill more deride,
And ſome traduce, and pour their ſp'een around,
Chriſt's ſheep will hear, and venerate the ſound.
Let truth's bright lamp ſhine ſtill with heavenly light,
To teach us timely what is wrong and right.
An unction from the holy one impart,
T' illume the mind, and renovate the heart,
That glory thence may to thy name accrue,
This cloud refreſh like ſoft celeſtial dew;
From paths of error and of vice reſtore,
And lead their ſons thy mercy to implore.
When man's each work ſhall by the fire be try'd
O may this work the trying fire abide,
The cauſe it pleads yet univerſal prove;
God's cauſe and man's is univerſal love.
To ſhare ſalvation be my care ſupreme,
And let ſalvation be my deareſt theme,
My pleaſant taſk the guilty to reſtore,
That humbled ſinners may thy grace adore.
My taſk be this, ſo long as I have breath,
To ſhew the path that leads from ſin and death—
That leads to climes where living waters flow,
And fruits immortal in rich cluſters grow,
That thence ſalvation may redound to men,
To God high praiſe—rejoin thyſelf, Amen!

AN HYMN,

ON THE CREATION OF THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH, FOUNDED ON THE ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION OF THE OLD—GEN. I.

PART I.

JOHN, from his bleſt celeſtial ſeat,
Heard Jeſus' voice proclaim,
While ſons of light the notes repeat,
And glory in his name;

New heavens appear, new earth ariſe,
To vital coaſts of light;
His word renews the former ſkies,
And earth immur'd in night.

Thick darkneſs had o'erſpread the deep,
Let there be light, he ſaid;
The gloom no more its reign can keep,
For light his word obey'd.

He bade rich clouds of ſaving grace
O'er earth expand their wing;
And all things now renew their face,
Like nature freſh in ſpring.

The liquid world no more appears,
It leaves extenſive land;
Henceforth no vale of ſtrife and tears,
All dreſs'd by Jeſus' hand.

Fair Eden's trees, of rich attire,
The new form'd earth array,
All crown'd with fruits, fair to deſire,
Which his great love diſplay.

On the abyſs the myſtic dove
Exerts his ſacred might,
Whence fowls and birds, new-fram'd by love,
Spring into ſons of light.

Theſe ſprung from God, divinely fair
And grace ſhall them reſtore;
Tho' long abandon'd to deſpair,
That grace they'll yet adore.

Into the dread and burning lake
Shall living waters flow;
Its bane theſe cure, ſweet waters make,
Which all their death forego. *

On theſe the fiſhers caſt their nets,
The finny tribes incloſe;
Each child of woe his pains forgets,
And none are longer foes.

Rich ſprings of bliſs now ope to theſe,
Along the flowery verge;
The wells of calves and goats ſhall pleaſe,
Who late from woes emerge. †

In robes of white they grace adore,
Salvation is their theme;
No pains, or tears, or death ſhall more
Becloud their riſing beam.

* Ezek. xlvii. 9. † *En-eglaim*, fountain of calves; *En-gedi*, well of the goats, alſo, fountain of happineſs, Ezek. xlvii. 10.

PART II.

The ſun, tho' bright to rule the day,
And moon to rule the night,
Aſham'd, ſuppreſs their fainter ray,
Before ſupernal light.

From Zion's walls a glory ſhines
Of bleſt celeſtial light,
Where gladſome day no more declines,
Nor fear they ſhades of night.

The ſons of God in chorus join,
Attune their golden lyre,
High to extol, in praiſe divine,
The Great Eternal Sire.

The Jub'lee trump o'er all reſounds,
The nations join acclaim;
And the whole earth's remoteſt bounds
Are fill'd with Jeſus' fame.

Now run the times, long ſince foretold,
Of his redeem'd the year;
Then into new ſhall paſs the old,
When he ſhall crown'd appear.

Then ſhall his kingdom fully come,
His will on earth be done,
As now in heaven; for 'tis his home,
His temple is with men.

The prieſts of God, theſe dear firſt-born,
As kings and prieſts appear;
Their glory ſhall this earth adorn,
The younger race them hear.

Immenſe thy power, great God of light!
That can thus all renew!
The earth, ſo late immers'd in night,
A furnace vaſt to view,

Now vies in charms with Eden fair,
One vaſt rich Paradiſe,
Repleniſh'd with paternal care,
And knit to yonder ſkies.

Once from the teeming earth did ſpring
The firſt-born heirs of light;*
Now from the lake the Almighty King
Reſtores the ſons of night.

Fair in his eye all creatures ſtood,
When firſt he being gave;
And now himſelf declares them good,
When thus his hand ſhall ſave.

Thus death, in every form, ſhall die;
His ſlaves, by Chriſt made free,
Shall owe ſalvation to the ſky,
And ſhout, God bleſſed be!

When Chriſt reſigns his ſaving ſway,
Preſents his charge to God,
Who can that glorious *fete* diſplay?
Deſcribe the bleſt abode?

If earth ſuch glory ſhall attain,
The loſt ſo long be bleſt;
What our Jehovah's chief domain,
His laſt and glorious reſt!

The new creation of his might,
Before him ſhall remain;
Still bleſt with day detach'd from night,
How glorious that domain!

PART III.

My ſoul be loſt in love and praiſe,
In wonder too be loſt;
'Mong his redeem'd thy voice ſtill raiſe,
And of Immanuel boaſt.

Aſcribe to him, ye ſons of men,
Of all his works the fame;
To this ſubjoin your loud Amen,
Your theme be ſtill his name.

Theſe are thy works, bleſt Power above,
Thy hand the whole ſhall frame,
Inſcrib'd with univerſal love,
Memorial to thy name.

To thee, the all-creating Sire,
Immortal praiſe be given,
Who thus wilt dreſs, in rich attire,
The faireſt works of heaven.

Thou art the laſt who always waſt,
We live, move, breathe in Thee;
And why ſhould not thy mercy laſt,
To ſet thy captives free?

All ſuch are thine, and firſt were made
Thy pleaſure to infure;
If left for ever loſt and dead,
How wilt thou this ſecure?

And yet thy ſolemn oath maintains
Thou wilt no pleaſure take,
In what gives ſorrow, grief, and pains,
Or creatures wretched make.

In all the works thy hands have made,
Wilt thou at length rejoice;
And theſe in thee their God be glad,
In praiſe lift up their voice?

Then ſin and woe an end muſt find,
Theſe works be pure and bleſt,
Each he reſtor'd in his own kind,
The whole thy glorious reſt.

Almighty God! how glorious thou!
What feeble worms are we!
Let the whole race of beings bow,
And homage pay to Thee.

Thou art our Father, we will cry,
Thou art our God alone;
Regard us with a parent's eye,
And ſave us from thy throne!

Thy tender mercies ſtill renew,
And all our ſins remove;
The hearts of all thy foes ſubdue
With thy all-conquering love.

PART IV.

Ye friends of truth, your ear incline,
Let truth and reaſon ſway;
Their dictates are each one divine,
Their ſacred voice obey.

If Jeſus will have all men brought
To know and feel his word;
That he with love ſo great is fraught
Why not with joy record?

* At the reſurrection.

Can we regret our Lord ſhould have
The loſt ſheep whom he fought?
Or once be ſorry he ſhould ſave
All that himſelf has bought?

Did he taſte death for every man,
Who is of all the Lord?
Why then not reſcue all he can,
And be by all ador'd?

Can it offend us to be told
That every knee ſhall bow,
And all in him become one fold,
And willing homage do?

Did he endure ſuch grief and pain
His love to manifeſt?
Can we not bear the whole of men
Should love to him atteſt?

Should Jeſus to himſelf ſubdue
All his rebellious foes,
How can this, Chriſtians, injure you?
In him compaſſion flows.

Should he reclaim them by his love,
They love him in return;
Why ſhould our angry paſſions move?
Have we juſt cauſe to mourn?

If but one ſinner turn by grace,
There's joy in climes above;
And why ſhould we to ſpleen give place?
The good of all ſeeks love.

If to our Lord great fame redound
From every foul he'll ſave;
Should his rich grace to all abound,
Will he leſs glory have?

Whence then ſuch clamour and ſuch noiſe
Againſt a plan divine?
When we ſhould rather all rejoice;
For in it grace does ſhine.

May not the Lord do with his own
Whate'er to him ſeems right?
For he for ever fills a throne
Whence nought proceeds but light.

Be wiſe, and from this work forbear,
If 'tis of men, 'tis nought;
But if from God, his counſel hear,
And by his word be taught.

BRIEF SUMMARY

OF SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE FOR THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

THE doctrine of the Reſtoration, if admitted to be true, muſt appear of univerſal concern. The dictates of humanity, and that univerſal benevolence and love, which the goſpel inculcates, and its divine Author has exemplified, muſt lead every one that feels their divine influence to wiſh it may be true. The perſon who does not, or ſhews himſelf unreaſonably tenacious of the oppoſite doctrine, does little honour to his character, either as a man or a Chriſtian. A doctrine ſo congenial to God's paternal character, ſo highly glorifying to the great Redeemer, ſo elucidating to many paſſages of ſcripture, and harmonizing to the whole volume of inſpiration, bearing, at the ſame time, ſuch a friendly aſpect to the human race, deſerves the cooleſt inveſtigation. If found true, upon mature and candid inquiry, we are called to contend earneſtly for it, as an important branch of that faith which was once delivered to the ſaints. Moſes would not give up one hoof of the Jewiſh cattle to Pharoah, and yet one intelligent being is far more valuable than many herds of cattle. Why then ſhould we voluntarily conſign, to all eternity, countleſs millions of God's nobleſt works to the greateſt tyrant in the univerſe, if his word do not ſhut us up to the neceſſity of ſo doing?

The comparatively ſmall number that are ſaved by the preſent diſpenſation of the goſpel, furniſhes a very urgent argument in favour of the Reſtoration. When we attend to the nature of genuine Chriſtianity, as delineated in the holy ſcriptures, and compare the ſentiments and conduct of thoſe who are calle *Chriſtians with* that ſtandard, we are conſtrained to draw the mourn*ful* con*c*

ſion, That there are few that ſhall be ſaved. If there be no reſtoration, all the reſt muſt periſh throughout endleſs duration. Dr Hylen, in his Coſmography, or Deſcription of the World, tells us, that dividing the whole world into thirty parts, nineteen of theſe are inhabited by idolaters. Of the eleven parts which remain, Jews, Turks, and Saracens poſſeſs ſix. Two of the other five are of the Greek communion; the other three being divided between thoſe of the Church of Rome and the Proteſtant or Reformed Churches. How few of the latter are real Chriſtians, if the Bible be the teſt of that true and undefiled religion before God, without which no man ſhall ſee him! In the parable of the ſower, our Lord divides them into four parts, one only of which is approved; and yet how many thouſands called Chriſtians belong to neither of theſe four claſſes! Even among the ſtricteſt and moſt religious profeſſors, who are termed virgins, only one half are deſcribed as wiſe, and having oil in their veſſels with their lamps. A ſyſtem that dooms all the reſt to endleſs woe, deſerves to be carefully examined by the unerring light of divine truth; for can we ſuppoſe that the Author of all exiſtence, the Father of mercies, and the God of love, has made all the reſt of men in vain, or worſe than in vain? Does he not own the relation of a Father to them all? and have we not reaſon to think he would be aſhamed to be called their Father, and to call them his offspring, if he had made no other proviſion for their happineſs than the received doctrine aſcertains? *If I am a Father*, ſays he, *where is my honour?*

Is not endleſs miſery inconſiſtent with the plain and obvious meaning of the following paſſages of ſcripture, which contain unconditional or abſolute promiſes made to ancient Iſrael, that can never be accompliſhed on the common ſyſtem? "This people have I formed for myſelf; *they ſhall* ſhew forth my praiſe. Iſrael *ſhall* be ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation. Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I *will* be glorified. In him *ſhall all* the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory."—Theſe promiſes are made, in the firſt inſtance at leaſt, to all the children of Iſrael; and no intervening circumſtances can invalidate God's promiſes. To them is addreſſed that declaration, "I have loved thee with an everlaſting love, and therefore with loving kindneſs will I draw thee."—Does he not ſay to that very people, "I am God, and there is none like me; my counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure?" Iſa. xlvi. 3, 9, 10.—What wonderful diſcoveries have we of the Lord's deſigns towards the whole houſe of Iſrael, in Ezek. 37th, throughout? Paul, in the 11th of the Romans corroborates theſe promiſes, and ſums up theſe deſigns: "For God hath concluded them *all* in unbelief," or ſhut them all up together, "that he might have mercy upon *all*," Rom. xi. 32. "*All* Iſrael ſhall be ſaved; the Deliverer ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I ſhall take away their ſins," ver. 26, 27. Have not the Jews, for theſe eighteen hundred years, died in unbelief? whence, if there be no reſtoration, how ſhall ſuch promiſes be accompliſhed? The apoſtle reaſons, ver. 16. "If, or *ſeeing*, the firſt-fruit is holy, the lump is alſo holy; and ſince the root is holy, ſo *are the branches*." The *firſt-fruit* and the *root* are the *Patriarchs*; the *lump and the branches* are the whole *Jewiſh* nation, that are ſtill beloved for the *ſake of theſe fathers*, and included in the covenant made with them.

The ſcriptures alſo abound with abſolute promiſes, that include all mankind, and cannot be fully accompliſhed, if part of them are left in endleſs miſery, Gen. xii. 3. Iſa. xxv. 8.—xlv. 23. Luke ii. 10.—iii. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 22.

The univerſal doctrine may be ſucceſsfully argued from the perfections of Deity, revealed in his word: From the relations he ſuſtains to his creatures; and from the titles with which Meſſiah is inveſted. The reaſon aſſigned, Pſal. xxv. 8. why God will *teach ſinners in the way*, is permanent and immutable, his goodneſs and uprightneſs. The ſame reaſon is given why his *tender mercies* are over all his works; Pſal. cxlv. 9. He is called the God of the ſpirits of *all* fleſh, Num. xvi. 22. and xxvii. 16. He is alſo called the Father of ſpirits; and Paul admits that all men are his offspring, Heb. xii. 9. Acts xvii. 29.—Job advances a general truth, when he ſays, addreſſing himſelf to God, "Thou wilt have a deſire to the work of thine hands," Job xiv. 15. Is this deſire conſiſtent with theſe works remaining always polluted and wretched?—Chriſt is called *the deſire of all nations*, and the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*; and will theſe titles be never realized? He is the true kinſman Redeemer; and will he never deliver any of his brethren but the firſt-born? Is he ſuch a reſpecter of perſons?

God's expreſs purpoſe concerning his creatures, ſecures the reſtoration of the lapſed part of them, which is their being *gathered together in Chriſt*, or reſtored to a ſtate of union with him, in the *diſpenſation of the fulneſs of the times*, Eph. i. 9, 10. Jehovah declares, "My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure," Iſa. xlvi. 10. He made and preſerves all things for his own pleaſure, and ſolemnly declares he has no pleaſure in the death of thoſe who periſh, Rev. iv. 11. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Will God loſe his end in giving exiſtence?

The grand deſign of our Lord's appointment as Mediator, the deſtruction of the works of the devil, and the reſtoration of God's works to ſuch a ſtate that he can rejoice in them, is a powerful argument in favour of the reſtitution of all things, 1 John iii. 8. Eph. iv. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 28. "That God may be all in all," or *the all in all*, Phil. iii. 21. Acts iii. 21. Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21. Rev. xi. 5. Pſal. civ. 31—ciii. 22.—The ordinance of the firſt-fruits aſcertains the ſame event, Lev. xxiii. James i. 18. Our Lord is called the *firſt-fruits*, with regard to thoſe who ſhall be found his at his coming, as they alſo are the firſt-fruits unto God and the Lamb, 1 Cor. xv. 20. Rev. xiv. 4. We may as well deny the connection between the glorification of Chriſt, as the firſt-fruits of his people, the church of the firſt-born, and theirs in due time, as ſeparate the connection betwixt them, and thoſe of whom they are ſaid expreſsly to be the firſt-fruits. Does not our Lord declare, that every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted, *ſhall be rooted up?* Mat. xv. 13. and will ſin, the only plant which he has not planted, remain deeply rooted for ever?

The promiſed efficacy of the word and judgments of God ſecures the final reſtoration of all men, Iſa. lv. 11.—xxvi. 9. In the latter of theſe paſſages, it is expreſsly promiſed, that the inhabitants of the world ſhall learn righteouſneſs, when God's judgments are, or ſhall be in the earth. Will this declaration be ever verified? Does not the ſuperabundance of grace above ſin, which Paul aſſerts, aſcertain the ſame glorious iſſue? Rom. v. 20. The verb in both clauſes, *in what grammarians* call the aoriſt, or indefinite tenſe, plainly ſhewing that

the abounding of grace above ſin cannot be confined to any period of time. The nature of prayer and Chriſtian charity, which we are bound to extend to all men, and the native effect of divine grace on the human heart, afford ſo many proofs of the univerſal doctrine. How can death be totally deſtroyed, and all nations, yea, all things, inherited by Chriſt, if death or miſery is to exiſt without end, and the far greater part of intelligent beings are to remain under the dominion of ſin and death to all eternity? 1 Cor. xv. 26. Pſal. lxxxii. 8. Heb. i. 2.—Is it probable, or even admiſſable, that two principles, ſo diametrically oppoſite as infinite good and infinite evil, are to exiſt in the univerſe without end? Will God never deſtroy that which he hates and abhors?

The threatening denounced againſt Satan, Gen. iii. 15. which involves the deſtruction of his power and authority over men, as appears from the illuſtration of it in the ſacred writings, includes, if properly underſtood, all that is contended for, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. Heb. ii. 14. The promiſe and oath of God, recorded Gen. xii. 3.—xviii. 18 and xxii. 18. alſo xxvi. 4. and referred to Acts iii. 25, 26. Rom. iv. 11. Gal. iii. 8. are concluſive in favour of the reſtoration. This promiſe and oath include all nations, even all the nations that ſhall at any time exiſt, as appears from Pſal. lxxxvi. 9. and comprehend all the kindreds and all the families that pertain to them. From Pſal. lxxii. 17. it appears that this extends to men without exception, and we ſee the happy effect of it, in that all nations ſhall yet be brought to call him bleſſed, which plainly imports, that they ſhall be previouſly bleſſed by him. That the nations which forget God ſhall be turned into hell, is certain, from Pſal. ix. 17. and if they remain there always, how ſhall the above things be verified?

We may infer the ſame conſolatory truth of the final reſtoration, from God's willing the ſalvation, or recovery of all men, 1 Tim. ii. 4. and giving them into the hand of Chriſt for that purpoſe, John iii. 35.; from his not willing that any ſhould periſh, 2 Pet. iii. 9.; and from the Father's will that of all which he hath committed to him, he ſhould loſe nothing, John vi. 39. Alſo from the deſign of our Lord's coming into the world, the ſalvation or recovery of that which was loſt, Mat. xviii. 11. The univerſal efficacy of the power of God, quickening *all* things, ſecures the final iſſue pleaded for, 1 Tim. vi. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45. Rev. xxi. 5. The deſire and prayer of the faithful, Pſal. vii. 9. founded on the expreſs declarations of ſcripture, 1 John iii. 8. Mat. xv. 13. ſecures the final deſtruction of ſin, that work of the devil and of wicked men. And is not the ſame truth obvious from the many aſſurances we have that *all* things ſhall be ſubdued by Chriſt, and be ſubject to him at length? Heb. ii. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28. Rom. viii. 21. Phil. ii. 10, 11. Rev. v. 13. It is promiſed, Pſal. cxlv. 10. that *all* the works of Jehovah ſhall praiſe him; and we find them ſo employed in the laſt quoted paſſage, Rev. v. 13. Elſewhere he is ſaid to rejoice in his works, Pſal. civ. 31. and they too, to expreſs their joy in him, and gratitude to him, by praiſing him; and ſurely univerſal praiſe ought to be admitted as a plain proof of univerſal happineſs.

Is not God ſaid to have loved the world, John iii. 16. and Chriſt to have taken *away the ſins of* the world? John i. 29. Does not the Father's declaration, in *the parable of* the prodigal, ſhew that the elder brother cannot intend the un-

believing Jews, or Pharaſaical Chriſtians; "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine?" Luke xv. 31. The three things contained in this reply are deſcriptive of the excluſive privilege of the church of the firſt-born; whence the younger brother muſt intend the reſt of mankind.

Are we not aſſured that God ſhall wipe away *all* tears, that there ſhall be no more death, ſorrow, crying, or pain, and that former things ſhall paſs away? Rev. xxi. 4. And does not the prophet, in the parallel place, Iſa. xxv. 8. extend this privilege to all mankind? "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off *all* faces," &c. Both paſſages, in their connection, muſt include the extinction of all human miſery. Let the 7th and 14th chapters of the Revelation be attentively read, and it will clearly appear, that the great multitude, which no man can number, cannot intend the elect, whoſe peculiar character and privileges are excluſively poſſeſſed by the ſealed number, who alone can ſing the peculiar ſong of the ſaints, the prieſts and kings of the Moſt High. Who are theſe that ſhall be found ſhedding tears when the whole church of the firſt-born is repreſented as complete in glory, "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband?" What nations need healing after this glorious event? and yet we find the leaves of the tree of life are intended for the healing of the nations, which cannot intend the elect, they being already glorified, and never ſo deſcribed. Admitting that theſe nations are they who are to be reſtored to holineſs and happineſs, at the times of the reſtitution of all things, we will at once ſee how our Lord is the Saviour of all men, though eſpecially of thoſe that believe, and how his ſalvation may be termed a *common* ſalvation.

Seeing this view of the goſpel terminates in a proſpect ſo glorious and ſo intereſting to all mankind, let none raſhly condemn or reject it on that account. Let it be firſt proved, that Meſſiah came not to ſave the world, and to be the Saviour of all men—that he gave not his life a ranſom for all, nor has taſted death for every man—that death ſhall never be deſtroyed, nor all things be ſubdued by and to Chriſt—that tears ſhall never be wiped from all faces—that the works of the devil ſhall never be deſtroyed—that Chriſt made no peace by the blood of the croſs, in order to reconcile *all* to the Father—that the Father will never gather together all in Chriſt, nor have juſt cauſe to rejoice in his works, and they in him. Till this, and much more is proved, Chriſtians are bound to forbear oppoſition and all harſh cenſures, to inveſtigate the ſubject coolly, and cheriſh a ſacred awe, leſt they ſhould be found reſiſting God, by oppoſing an eſſential part of the goſpel, of which he has ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets. But admitting the truth of the reſtoration, may we not, with the pious and amiable Dr. Watts, in his preface to vol. 2d of his World to Come, anticipate the bleſſed conſequences of the univerſal jubilee as filling heaven, earth, and hell with hallelujahs of joy?

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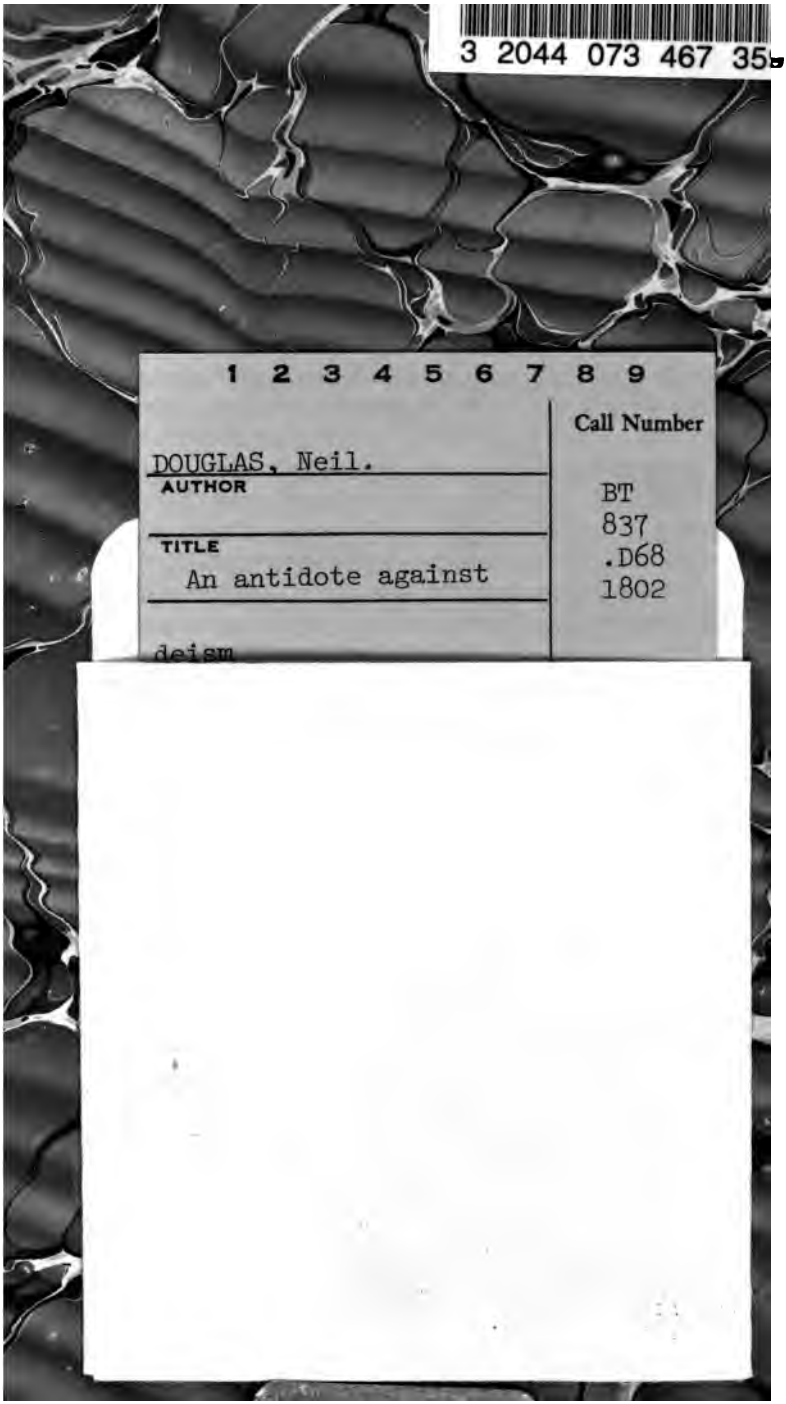
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